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DISCOURSES

TRACTS and POEMS,

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

Wiſdom the firſt Spring of Action in the Deity.

A Charge delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. *Haſkoll.*

A Charge delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. *Harſon.*

Queries propoſed to the conſideration of all ſuch as think it an Injury to Religion to ſhew the Reaſonableneſs of it.

A Letter to the Rev. Mr. *John Ball*, of *Honiton.*

Four Eſſays, on Beneficence, Benevolence, Novelty, and the Human Soul.

Five Letters to the Author of the St. *James*'s Journal.

Poems on ſeveral Occaſions.

By the Reverend Mr. HENRY GROVE, *of* TAUNTON.

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THE

WISDOM the first spring of Action in the DEITY.

A

DISCOURSE,

IN WHICH,

AMONG OTHER THINGS,

THE

Absurdity of GOD's being acted by NATURAL INCLINATIONS, and of an UNBOUNDED LIBERTY, is shewn.

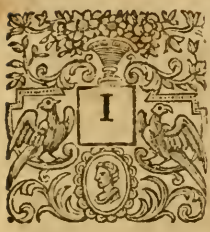
The MORAL ATTRIBUTES of GOD are explained.

The ORIGIN OF EVIL is considered.

The FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES of NATURAL RELIGION are shewn to be reasonable; and several things, advanced by some late Authors, and others, relating to these Subjects, are freely examined.

1734.

THE INTRODUCTION.



I Find, both from converſation, and ſeveral writings lately publiſhed, that it is growing more and more into faſhion to run down all proofs *a priori*, of the *moral attributes* of God, as well as of his *exiſtence*. Whether the *Being* of God is capable of this ſort of proof, I ſhall not at preſent inquire. I will ſuppoſe that it is not, and that the only way of coming to the knowledge of a *firſt cauſe* is from *effects*. But then, I take leave to ſay, that we are not under the ſame neceſſity of proving the *goodneſs*, and other moral perfections of God in this way, excluſive of every other kind of argument.

That there exiſts ſome unoriginated Being, we are certain from the evident abſurdity of an infinite ſeries of Beings, every one depending upon a former, yet all of them together independent of any firſt cauſe. That this firſt Being is poſſeſſed of all *wiſdom* and *power*, we gather from the frame of the univerſe in which are ſuch numberleſs and moſt wonderful diſplays of both theſe attributes, as at once ſatisfy the underſtanding, and exceed its utmoſt

comprehenſion. So far we reaſon merely from *effects*. But here we ſhall be obliged to change our method of reaſoning, if we intend to have any plain and invariable rule by which to guide our conceptions of God, as a *moral agent*, and our expectations from him. For how ſhall we know whether God be *juſt* and *good?* The ſober and conſidering part of mankind, and indeed all whoſe minds have not been corrupted by vice, or prepoſſeſſed by eſtabliſhed opinions, have univerſally agreed in aſcribing *juſtice* and *goodneſs* to the ſupreme Governor of the world. And by what have they been led into this uniformity in their ſentiments? Hath it been intirely by obſerving the traces of theſe perfections in the works of Creation and Providence? Or rather hath it not been becauſe they judged the things themſelves to be highly worthy of God, and ſuch as the moſt perfect nature cannot want? Have they not apprehended an inherent, unchangeable excellence in theſe qualities, which hath been the ground of their concluding, that God can never be *unjuſt* or *malevolent*, becauſe then he would not be himſelf; and that, therefore, whatever ſeeming contradiction there may be between ſome appearances in Providence, and the idea of *perfect goodneſs*, the contradiction is not in the things themſelves, but wholly owing to our imperfect views of the ways and works of God? That this, which is the common notion of mankind, and that which moſt naturally offers

offers itſelf to the mind, concerning the intrinſick lovelineſs and excellence of thoſe, which we call the *moral perfections* of the Deity, or their being neceſſarily and everlaſtingly fit, and becoming that Being whoſe *underſtanding* is infinite, and his *majeſty* above all compariſon; that this notion, I ſay, is abſolutely right, and that, conſequently, we need not ſearch for any other principle of action in the divine Being but that *boundleſs intelligence* or *wiſdom*, to which all the fitneſſes and reaſons of things, in all their varieties and degrees, are ever naked and open, this is what I have attempted to ſhew in the Firſt Chapter of this Diſcourſe; I hope, not without all ſucceſs.

I have only this ſingle *lemma* to premiſe, *viz. that there is a negative rectitude in the divine nature*; by which I mean, that God hath no wrong biaſs upon him, no inclination to any thing, which to his *wiſdom*, that is never deceived, appears unbecoming him to do. I might content myſelf with referring to what I have afterwards, I think, proved, that there are in God no *inclinations* or *affections* of any kind, properly ſo called; and to be ſure then none that interfere with his immutable ideas of *juſt* and *right*. But I add this further conſideration, that the *exiſtence* of God being neceſſary, his *wiſdom* infinite, his *power* equal to his *wiſdom*, and his *eſſence* ſimple and uncompounded, there can be no

room for an inteſtine war between *wiſdom* and *inclination*. We can account for all the irregular deſires of mankind, condemned by their own Reaſon, either from bodily temper and complexion, or miſtaken and narrow notions of perſons or things, or their having been croſſed and baffled in their deſigns, or from the influence of cuſtom and example; nothing of which, or a like nature, having place with regard to God, it is evident that he cannot be *tempted with evil*, nor by the ſame neceſſity of nature (which is a ſimple uniform idea) both diſcern that which is good, and be inclined to the contrary. From whence I conclude, that God hath no ſuch *inclinations* or *affections* as oppoſe the dictates of his infinite *wiſdom*.

The Author deſigns not by any thing he hath ſaid, to make innovations in our common language, when we are ſpeaking of the Deity. He is very well contented that certain expreſſions, conſecrated by long uſe (ſuch as *decrees* and *purpoſes*, *kind affections* and *inclinations*, *compaſſion*, &c.) ſhould ſtill keep poſſeſſion. Only, he thinks that the old rule ought to be applied here, that what is ſpoken in compliance with human weakneſs, muſt be underſtood in a manner worthy of God. That ſuch language is popular, not philoſophical; fitted to ſtrike the imagination and paſſions, and therefore uſed; not ſuch as *mere Reaſon* would make choice of.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

SECT. I. WHEN I examine my notion of the ſelf-exiſtent, all-perfect Being, I find, among others, theſe two ideas, of *infinite knowledge*, and a correſpondent *energy*, or *active force* included in it. The knowledge which this Being hath, of what is fit or unfit, to be choſen, or done in every ſuppoſable circumſtance, is what we mean by the *wiſdom* of God. Theſe fitneſſes and unfitneſſes, are diſtinguiſhed into natural and moral. *Natural fitneſs* is (chiefly at leaſt) the fitneſs or ſubſerviency of things and actions in their own nature, to ſome good end. *Moral fitneſs* is the fitneſs or congruity, that intelligent and free agents ſhould make choice of certain ends preferably to others, and of certain actions, as means ſuited and adapted to theſe ends. That there are different moral kinds of action, ſome

fit, others unfit to be done, ſome becoming, others unbecoming the ſupreme Being, and this independently of his chuſing or willing them, is as evident, as that there are moral perfections and excellencies belonging to the divine nature.

Sect. II. The *will* of God conſtantly to act after this or that manner, cannot be eſteemed an excellence, if, on ſuppoſition, he had *willed* to act in a different and contrary way, the former manner would have had nothing great and excellent in it. The excellence or dignity, muſt be firſt in one way and method of acting above another, and from thence be transfered to the *will*, which, being ſteddily and complacentially determined that way, is therefore ſaid to have a *rectitude* in it, or to be *holy* and *juſt* and *good*. Otherwiſe the meaning and proof of God's moral perfections would be no more than this, that he *wills* what he *wills*, and *doth* every thing he *doth*; becauſe his *willing* or *doing* it, makes that a perfection or excellence, which in its own nature is abſolutely indifferent.

Sect. III. The *wiſdom* of God is primarily converſant about ends, and ſecondarily only about the means. All ends are not morally indifferent, till God, by his arbitrary choice, eſtabliſhes a difference between them. *e. g.* It is not a thing indifferent, whether the end

end propoſed by God in creating intelligent Beings, *ſhall be the diſplay of his ſovereign and uncontroulable power in their everlaſting miſery, without the leaſt thing done by them to deſerve it; raiſing their expectations by expreſs and ſolemn promiſes, and then diſappointing them*; whether God ſhall propoſe this as his end in their creation, or ſomewhat elſe, is not, I ſay, a thing morally indifferent. The ſun in the heavens is not more viſible by its own light, than the truth of this maxim, *that whoever knowingly and wilfully hurts another without cauſe, is guilty of injuſtice*; and the greater the hurt, the greater the injuſtice. What is without cauſe, or reaſon is without right, and what is without right in the preſent caſe, is contrary to it, even to that right which every Being hath, not to ſuffer thoſe evils which no other Being hath a right to inflict. Now can any thing be more dreadful to the ſufferer than *eternal miſery?* Or more without a cauſe or reaſon, when he is able to plead his innocence? Such a proceeding would be at an infinite diſtance from all right, and therefore infinitely unworthy of the moſt excellent nature. To be taken out of a ſtate of non-exiſtence, and immediately condemn'd to a ſtate of everlaſting torment, much more after a life of the moſt exact obedience and ſubmiſſion to its Maker, is what the creature might juſtly complain of; and ſtill more, if there was the ſecurity of a promiſe on God's

part

part of a contrary treatment. Let any one, for argument's ſake, make this his own caſe, and then ſay, whether he ſhould not think himſelf to have juſt matter of complaint; and then let him conſider further, whether the complaint being juſt, the thing complain'd of can be juſt too. So far then we are got, *that there is an eſſential everlaſting fitneſs in juſtice, and faithfulneſs.*—Let us now ſee whether we cannot advance further.

Sect. IV. Nothing whatſoever is of value but happineſs, either the agent's own, or the happineſs of other Beings; or that which hath ſome relation to happineſs; either more immediate or remote, neceſſary or voluntary, to happineſs itſelf, or to the capacities of it. A univerſe of unintelligent matter falling (if you pleaſe) by chance, into the moſt conſummate order and regularity, but without any mind to diſcern and enjoy its beauties, is in effect nothing, becauſe good for nothing. Nor is the caſe mended by adding intelligence and perception, if that intelligence and perception, be not attended with pleaſure; perception without all pleaſure, is no better than figure and magnitude without perception, as theſe are juſt equal in value to nothing. To perception add miſery, and nothing will deſerve the preference. From hence I proceed to argue thus — That which immediately and properly cauſes miſery and not

not happineſs, or leſs happineſs than miſery, is upon the whole evil or worſe than nothing; that which cauſes neither happineſs nor miſery, either immediately or upon reflection, is neither good nor evil, and ſo will ſerve for no more, than to weigh againſt nothing. *Beauty* and *order* are, in their own nature, fitted to communicate pleaſure to percipient Beings, that are proper judges of them; in the natural world as they are arguments of deſign and ſkill in the framer, and lead the thoughts to beauties of a higher kind; in the moral world, as they are the effects of the nobleſt faculties applied to their right uſe. When I ſay that theſe things are in their *nature* fitted to produce pleaſure, my meaning is, that nothing is required to this pleaſure, but a clearneſs of perception, without any biaſs or inclination, one way or the other. But now, on the contrary, were it ſuppoſeable (which it is not) that *beauty* and *order* had no more aptitude to give pleaſure, than *deformity* and *confuſion*, there would be nothing to chuſe between them.

SECT. V. Let us apply this to the two accompliſhments, ſo univerſally coveted, of *knowledge* and *power*; they can no otherwiſe be perfections, or things rather to be deſired than the want of them, than as the Being who poſſeſſes them is the happier for them himſelf, or more capable of promoting the happineſs

happineſs of others. We muſt therefore grant that end to be beſt for a knowing and powerful Being, in the purſuit of which, his *knowledge* and *power* will contribute to actual happineſs, or to the capacities and opportunities of it. Why I add this reſtriction, will be ſeen preſently. After this manner are we obliged to reaſon concerning the *knowledge* and *power* of God himſelf, the ſupreme and beſt of all Beings. Is the original deſign of God in exerciſing theſe attributes, the *miſery* or *happineſs* of his creatures? It cannot be their *miſery*, for the reaſon before given; and becauſe, if this be their intended effect, they are directed to no valuable end, and are, therefore, ſo far conſidered, at beſt of no uſe either in themſelves, or to the poſſeſſor, unleſs his happineſs be conceived to grow out of their *miſery*; an imagination ſo contradictory to the notion of a perfect Being, that I preſume no one who believes God to be ſuch a Being, did ever expreſly and directly entertain it. There is indeed a contradiction in the very ſuppoſition, that the *miſery* of the creature makes the *happineſs* of the Creator. As his own works he cannot hate them without hating himſelf; he muſt therefore hate them, if at all, for works done by them; therefore could not hate them before they were created; therefore could not create them to be *miſerable*. Beſides, what are the works for which God can hate his creatures? If for *evil*, theſe they

they might have avoided, and then would not have been *miſerable*; if for *good*, or becauſe they have done no *evil*, this would be *injuſtice*, which would cauſe as much pain by claſhing with his clear and adequate ideas of right and wrong, as it could be ſuppoſed to afford pleaſure, by feeding a malicious temper; not to add, that the ſame neceſſity cannot be the original of malice, and of that right judgment which diſcovers and condemns the evil of it.

SECT. VI. It is a very ingenious compariſon of Biſhop *Cumberland* *, "the greateſt "power that can be imagined, without wiſ- "dom and juſtice (add goodneſs too) implies "no more of *bleſſedneſs* or of *majeſty*, than "what may be found in a maſs of lead, ſup- "poſed to be of an infinite weight; for, as "thoſe who underſtand *Mechanicks* know "very well, there may be a weight equivalent "to any power." We might otherwiſe reſemble power, ſeparate from moral attributes, to a reſiſtleſs tempeſt, that carries all before it; which agrees with the notion the famous *Earl of Rocheſter* owned himſelf to have had of the Deity †, *as a vaſt power, that wrought every thing, by the neceſſity of its nature.* ‡ From all

* De *Legib. Nat.* p. 226. 4°. † *See* His Life by Biſhop *Burnet*.

‡ The Divinity excels in three things; immortality, power, and virtue; of theſe the moſt venerable and divine

all this I infer, that the end or deſign of God in the Creation, muſt be *happineſs*; as to the degree, and manner of attaining it, ſuited to the faculties, and dependence, and the freedom of his reaſonable creatures; or to ſpeak more ſtrictly, a *capacity of happineſs*, which muſt be valuable, for the ſame reaſon that *happineſs* itſelf is ſo. It is fit that reaſonable creatures ſhould be made free, that they may freely acknowledge their dependence on the Firſt Cauſe, and act according to it. And it is fit that the *happineſs* of a creature, whoſe actions are free, ſhould be the effect of the right uſe of his own freedom. With this only limitation, the *happineſs* of his creatures muſt always be deſigned by the Creator. The fitneſs of *puniſhment* is deducible from what hath been now ſaid of *happineſs*, and is not to be explained in any other way. For, becauſe *happineſs* hath enough in its idea, to awaken the active powers of an intelligent Being; becauſe it is very plain, wherein the *happineſs* of ſuch a Being muſt principally conſiſt, even in the ſatisfaction of its largeſt and moſt exalted faculties, and that the only means conducing to ſuch a *happineſs*, is the love and practice of univerſal goodneſs, which is the immediate

divine is virtue. For the elements and vacuum have immortality; earthquakes, thunders, ſtorms and torrents have great power; but as for juſtice and equity, nothing participates thereof, except what is divine. *Plutarch*'s Life of *Ariſtides*. *vid. loc.*

immediate ſource of very great pleaſure to a well-diſpoſed mind: and becauſe further, it is in the power of this Being, to uſe theſe means with ſucceſs, therefore it is fit, that this Being ſhould exert his faculties in an agreeable courſe of actions, and that, if he does not, he ſhould be puniſhed with the loſs of that *happineſs* which he neglects and deſpiſes.

SECT. VII. The ſum is — *That a reaſonable creature ſhould not be made miſerable, before he hath deſerved it*, is the firſt and moſt apparent fitneſs; *that he ſhould be made for happineſs* is the next; the next to which is, *that every reaſonable Being ſhould be obliged to chooſe Reaſon for his guide in the ſearch of happineſs*; which is followed with a fourth, *that he who will not be perſuaded to take the right way to be happy, ſhould be left to the conſequences of his own wrong choice.* But then the fitneſs that this or that particular perſon ſhould be puniſhed with the loſs of *happineſs*, is only accidental, and beſide the primary deſign of God, and therefore wholly to be aſcribed to the creature's own perverſneſs.

SECT. VIII. Another argument for fitneſs, in the choice of the end, is, that if there were no fitneſſes but with relation to the means, after God had firſt fixed his end, then what we call the *moral perfections* of God, (e. g. *juſtice*, *goodneſs*, and *truth*) are only ſo many

many *inclinations*, *propenſions*, or *affections* in the Divine Nature, to certain ways of acting, (or, if you pleaſe, *one inclination* branching itſelf into ſeveral ſtreams) not flowing from his *wiſdom*, but immediately from the ſame *original proper neceſſity* as that of his being *eternal* and *immenſe*. Now ſhould we grant *affections* in God anſwering to *inclinations* of *inſtinct* in mankind, yet it cannot be known what they are, unleſs anſwerable fitneſſes of action, ariſing from the natures and eſſences of things, be preſuppoſed, and it be further determined what thoſe fitneſſes are. Then, indeed, *neceſſity* being a uniform ſelf-conſiſtent thing, the neceſſary *propenſions* and *affections* of the Divine Being, if there are any ſuch, muſt fall in with the natures of things, which are founded in the ſame *neceſſity*. On the contrary; deny any ſuch antecedent fitneſſes, and you leave no poſſible way of knowing, with any certainty, what the *propenſions* of the ſelf-exiſtent nature are; the mere agreement of *actions* to his *inclinations*, whatever theſe *inclinations*, or thoſe *actions* be, making them to be good and eligible. It muſt therefore, after all the aſſurances which God hath given, or can give us, whether from the frame of the world, or by a ſupervening revelation, that he is ſo and ſo diſpoſed towards us, and intends to do, or obliges himſelf to do this and that for us; it muſt, I ſay, after all this, remain uncertain, whether he is ſo kindly *affectioned* as he declares,

clares, and will do as he promiſes; if ſo be a falſe declaration of his *affection* and *intention*, or a manifeſt breach of *promiſe* have nothing in them unworthy of the Deity; or only as they would be contradictory to his *inclination*; for how do I, how ſhall I know that he is ſo *inclined?* Or, that if he be ſo at preſent, the ſtream will not change its courſe, and his *inclination* turn to another point? In which caſe, what was before unworthy of him, will become highly worthy. The reſult is, admiting ſuch *antecedent affections*, yet the moral fitneſs, or unfitneſs of actions cannot be the effect of their agreement or diſagreement with theſe *affections*, but is an inſeparable adjunct to the nature of things; between which and the ſuppoſed *affections* there will be a harmony and conſpiration, as being both reſolvable into the ſame abſolute neceſſity.

SECT. IX. We have had attempts to prove the *goodneſs* of God, as it ſignifies (in ſome mens idea of it) *a kind inclination or principle of benevolence in the Deity, without any reaſon for it*; but I think, much ſhort of the mark. A certain Writer *, to the queſtion, *Why do you ſuppoſe God to be good rather than otherwiſe?* Anſwers, " Becauſe I can prove " him ſo *a poſteriori*, or by aſcending from " *effect* to *cauſe*. That this is an attribute of

* An Eſſay on moral obligation, *p.* 16, *&c.*

" the Deity, appears from the works of the " Creation, which is evidently contrived for " the good of the whole, or ſo as to mani- " feſt, that the deſign of the Creator therein " muſt be to communicate happineſs." Not to put this Gentleman in mind of the *evil*, both *natural* and *moral*, that is in the world, which hath driven ſome into the abſurd ſuppoſition of two firſt principles of things, one good, the other evil, and which muſt, at beſt, exceedingly weaken this argument for the *goodneſs* of God *a poſteriori*, when it reſts upon this foot, and there is ſuppoſed to be nothing in the idea of *goodneſs* itſelf, which implies it to be a perfection: not to dwell upon this, I ſhall only obſerve, that no concluſion can be drawn from *effects* in the preſent caſe, becauſe the phænomena which we have already ſeen are only a part, and it may be a very ſmall part of the univerſal plan, which God hath laid in his own thoughts; ſo that the ultimate deſign, for aught we know, may be the *final miſery* of all perceptive Beings, to be introduced by contrary appearances, that it may be the more ſurpriſing, and the more ſenſibly felt when it comes; or the predominant *affection* in God, may be the love of variety, which, in the courſe of ages, will produce a thouſand alterations in the univerſe, happineſs being ſometimes prepollent, at other times miſery. If from our ideas of *truth* and *goodneſs*, we cannot be

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ſure that there is any thing in the nature of theſe attributes, that ſhould give them the preheminence to *falſhood* and *cruelty*, then we cannot be ſure but this or any other may be the ſcheme projected, foraſmuch as we have ſeen ſo little of it, to be able to argue from *effects*, if we have nothing to aſſiſt and guide our reaſonings in the abſolute nature and fitneſs of things.

SECT. X. "But" (ſays another Author *, who eſpouſes the ſame notion, tho' to a very different purpoſe) "ſome things are "neceſſarily pleaſing or diſpleaſing, and that "which makes them ſo, is the relation there "is in the nature of the thing between the "object and the mind perceiving; what is "the reſult of this relation in moſt caſes, we "know not but by experience; yet this I "think we may be ſure of, that certain "things are in their nature incapable of being "the foundation of pleaſure; of which kind "I take *malevolence* to be." If by the relation in the nature of the things between the object and the mind perceiving, this Author meant the relation between the *object* and *judging faculty*, I intirely agree with him in his account of mental pleaſure and pain. But this he could not mean conſiſtently with his own hypotheſis; becauſe when an object gives pleaſure or pain, not by immediate and ſimple

* Two Letters from a *Deiſt* to his Friend, *p.* 33.

perception, but after reaſoning or making a judgment about it, it is for ſome apprehended fitneſs or unfitneſs in the object, to which we have, or have not, had regard in our conduct. And as to any other relation between an object and ſuch a mind as the ſupreme, it is abſolutely unconceivable; and, were it granted, would prove that *malevolence* might be natural and neceſſary, as well as any other affection, and afford as much pleaſure in the gratification. The gratifying of any inclination is pleaſant, and that the pleaſure is ſometimes over-paid for, is becauſe it is condemned by Reaſon; as its being condemned by Reaſon is, becauſe Reaſon judges it to be criminal or fooliſh. A beaſt of rapacious kind tears its prey in pieces, and feels no remorſe after it hath done; and the chief of intelligent Beings might in like manner delight in ſacrificing millions of innocent creatures to a cruel temper, without having the pleaſure in the leaſt abated, by the knowledge of what theſe wretched Beings undeſervedly ſuffered, could it be ſuppoſed that one reaſonable Being hath no concern in the happineſs or miſery of another, but as it affects his own; and ſetting aſide that connexion, cannot be blamed for refuſing to do the moſt eaſy action, in order to remove an unſupportable load of miſery, from a great number of innocent and virtuous Beings, or even for doing all in its power, to lay ſuch a load of miſery upon them.

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SECT. XI. Upon the whole, were it ſo, as theſe two Writers, one of them a *Chriſtian*, the other a *Deiſt*, ſay, that in point of moral excellence, there is no difference between *goodneſs* and *malice*, ſo that all the aſſurance we have that God is *good*, or hath an *inclination to do good*, is from the *effects*. Were this a true account of things, I ſhould think we were upon a very precarious bottom, and had nothing at all to truſt to, whether in the *phænomena* of nature, or the *promiſes* of the Goſpel, ſince the deſign in both might only be to deceive us. Would not this be a natural progreſſion? There are no ſuch things as moral fitneſſes, therefore no evidence for any ſuch attributes as *goodneſs*, *truth and faithfulneſs*, therefore no way of proving the *Chriſtian Revelation:* or, ſuppoſing the revelation of the truth of the things revealed, or a Providence that regards the actions of mankind, or a future ſtate, therefore no difference between *virtue* and *vice*, but only as they happen to affect our preſent intereſt. My mind would be unavoidably led, one ſtep after another, to this ſad concluſion of the whole matter. And how then are men to blame for thinking God to be delighted in thoſe lewd, ſuperſtitious, and inhuman ceremonies, which they have introduced into their religious worſhip? Why might not the character of *Belial* or *Moloch* have agreed to the true God? It was uſual for

the *Carthaginians* to offer children in ſacrifice to their Gods. The *Hiſtorian* * tells us, " they at one time ſacrificed two hundred " children of the beſt families to *Saturn*, " putting them into the hands of a brazen " ſtatue of that God, out of which they " dropped into a burning furnace beneath." And how could they know the impiety of this, if they had only *effects* to argue from, which according to their interpretation of them, ſignified that their ſullen God was angry, and not to be appeaſed on any other terms?

SECT. XII. There is one thing I cannot forbear remarking now I am upon this head, and that is, how far a man may be blinded by his attachment to a favourite hypotheſis. How elſe could one of the Gentlemen now mentioned (whoſe zeal for *Chriſtianity* I do not queſtion, tho' he be altogether unknown to me, as his book is proof ſufficient of his reaſoning abilities) have made an invidious reflection upon his adverſary, which returns with double force on himſelf? " It is eaſy, " ſaith he, to ſee what a pernicious tendency " the ſcheme of independent fitneſſes is of, " from the uſe that hath been made of it, by " a late advocate for Deiſm, whoſe whole " book is built upon this principle, that *duty* " and *obligation* ariſeth from the nature and " relations

* Diodor, Sicul. l. 20.

" relations of things." Lo! here is another *Deiſt* who agrees with this Author, in ſaying that *wiſdom* hath nothing to do but with the *means*, and that therefore the *goodneſs* of God is a pure natural *inclination*, which he follows without all conſideration of a ſuppoſed reaſon and fitneſs in things, which theſe Writers treat as an abſurdity. Shall I now, to bring an odium upon this principle, expoſe it as *the refuge of Deiſts*, when they are fleeing from the fear of future puniſhment? He who firſt ſet me the example, could not juſtly complain of me on this account. But the truth is, I have always had ſuch a diſlike to the *argumentum ab invidia ductum*, that I hope I ſhall never meddle with it. The only inquiry here ought to be, which of theſe two *Deiſts* hath argued right from his principles? That the Author of *Chriſtianity as old as the Creation*, muſt have quite miſtaken the doctrine of moral fitneſſes before he could think to preſs it into his ſervice againſt *Chriſtianity*, is evident from hence, that one of theſe fitneſſes is, *that the creature ſhould obey his Creator, without taking the liberty to queſtion, whether the command is from God, merely becauſe he does not ſee the fitneſs of the thing commanded*; unleſs it be a queſtion, whether *God* is wiſer than *man*; I might have ſaid, whether one man may not be ſo much wiſer, or better circumſtanced than another, as to diſcern an expediency where that other cannot? But now

the plain tendency of the aſſertion, *that there is no fitneſs in the divine actions but what is founded in natural inclination*, is that we ſhall be left under the utmoſt uncertainty, for want of knowing what theſe *inclinations* are; or, if we determine for *benevolence*, we ſhall be juſtified to believe, that however men behave, they ſhall certainly be happy, as happy as they are capable of being made, at laſt. Happineſs, whether men take care to fit themſelves for it or no, being the only thing that can ſatisfy that *benevolence* which is a *mere inclination* of nature; and therefore, where there is not a moral diſpoſition for happineſs, God, for his own ſake, will beſtow it. What hath now been ſaid of the *wiſdom* of God, will prepare the way for that which follows concerning his *will*.

CHAP. II.

SECT. I. THE *infinite energy*, or *active force*, which, when I am contemplating the nature of the ever-bleſſed God, is the other thing that offers itſelf to my thoughts, as comprehended in his idea, may be conceived to exert itſelf, in *willing* to do ſomething which he ſees fit to be done, or in doing what he *wills*. They, who make *will* and *power* to be in God the ſame, will excuſe me

me for ſpeaking of them as diſtinct; ſince, whatever my ſentiments are, I do not pretend to decide any thing in that controverſy by this manner of ſpeaking, but only follow the order of my ideas. The former of theſe I would call *volitive*, the latter *executive power*. I have not mentioned a third branch of the *active force*, diſtinct from the other two, becauſe, to me it appears very queſtionable, whether there be any ſuch, I had almoſt ſaid, next to certain that there is not. Were there indeed any ſuch thing as *inclination* in God, that did not come up to expreſs and full *volition*, nor follow the conduct of his unerring *wiſdom*; as *volition* does, but was in order of nature coexiſtent and independent, this I own would be a third way of conſidering the *active force*, and require another, and peculiar name, being as eaſily ſeparable in our ideas from the other two, as *gravitation*. (ſuppoſing ſuch a property were really inherent in matter, which I am well perſuaded it is not) would be from *actual motion*.

SECT. II. But, in the firſt place, the *poſſibility* of this ſort of *inclinations* in the Deity is hardly conceivable; for they will have the ſame kind of neceſſity as his exiſtence itſelf; and tho' they lie, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, in a parallel direction with the path that is marked out by his infinite underſtanding, ſo as to run on with it, and to terminate

nate in the ſame end, yet they will not in the leaſt be influenced by it. But now, how can the *active force* be imagined to tend one way rather than another, antecedent to the *knowledge* of God that one of theſe ways is preferable to the other? And, were this poſſible, would it really be a perfection? The *inclination* will be nevertheleſs mechanical for being ſeated in an intellectual nature, if it is abſolutely, phyſically, and immediately neceſſary; nor ever the leſs blind and unintelligent, for being united with *wiſdom* and *intelligence*, if that *wiſdom* and *intelligence* have no part in guiding the *inclination*, but are only ſubſervient to it in bringing about the end, which *inclination* excites to the purſuit of. And is a blind mechanical *inclination* to be numbered among real abſolute perfections; or a proper foundation for all the moral attributes of God? Yet thus it is we are taught to conceive of God by ſome Writers. The firſt idea in order (as they range them) is *goodneſs*, or a kind and benevolent, but undiſcerning *inclination*; then comes in *wiſdom*, which is inſtead of eyes to *inclination*, not to guide it in the choice of its end (for to this it is determined by a blind neceſſity) but of the moſt proper means of arriving at the end propoſed.

Sect. III. That there can be no place for ſuch *inclinations* in a perfect nature, I further prove after this manner. *Inclination* is founded

founded in ſome prior perception, *i. e.* there muſt be ſome perception, pleaſant or painful, that precedes *inclination*, or proper actual *inclination* will never exiſt. It is ſo, even as to the appetites of hunger and thirſt, which, if any one would think, ſhould immediately ariſe out of nature placed in proper circumſtances for it. And yet it is certain, all that neceſſarily follows the want of meat and drink, is only a painful ſenſation, not the deſire of meat and drink. Imagine the firſt man, the inſtant he was created, to have only felt the ſame uneaſineſs we do, when we are hungry and thirſty, and that, while he was in this condition, a chryſtal ſtream had run at his feet, and fruit of the fineſt taſte and colour had hung juſt before him, yet as long as he did not know the property of water to lay thirſt, and of the fruit to ſubdue hunger, and moreover, was not ſecretly admoniſhed by any effluvia of the agreeableneſs of theſe things to his animal nature, he would have had no more deſire to the water, than to the channel it flowed in; nor to the fruit, than to the timber of the tree which it grew on. So that even hunger and thirſt, as far as they ſignify an appetite, or actual inclination to meat and drink, are not the immediate growth of nature, but preſuppoſe a painful ſenſation, from which the appetite appears to be intirely diſtinct, by this conſideration that there is no connexion between them, but by

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the intervention of another perception. In like manner the *inclination* to relieve a miſerable object is, many times, owing to the pain occaſioned in the mind of the ſpectator by the ſight of ſuch an object. And may we think that, analogous hereto, God is liable to *uneaſy ſenſations*, for the removal of which, he is inclined to ſome particular actions? Certainly, this would not be to think worthily of him. But why may not certain ideas cauſe a pleaſing perception, as for inſtance, the idea of a happy creature, that owes its happineſs to God's free gift, from the pleaſure accompanying which idea, there ariſeth an *inclination* to produce ſuch a creature? To this I might anſwer, that the reaſon why the idea of a beneficent action begets pleaſure, is the apprehended fitneſs of ſuch an action; in which caſe, an *inclination* to that action, would not be an *inclination* of the ſort I am now diſputing againſt; this having no foundation in the fitneſs of things. But, without enlarging upon this anſwer, I ſhall juſt obſerve that there is no room, even for *inclinations* that are ſubſequent to the ideas and perceptions of the divine mind; that is, God does not, having perceived a fitneſs in actions, feel in himſelf an *inclination* to them as the effect of this perception. I cannot but look on this as a very odd notion, though, I confeſs, it is by no means ſo diſhonourable to God as the other. The grounds upon which I deny any

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ſuch *rational inclinations* in God as well as the other ſort, will be explained in their proper place. To proceed therefore,

SECT. IV. Will any one ſay there muſt be *natural inclinations* in God, becauſe there can be no exciting reaſon * to action without them; ſo that for want of this internal weight, the Deity muſt remain in an everlaſting ſuſpenſe, or indifference to all action? But to a Being of the moſt conſummate *wiſdom*, and unbounded *power*, not drawn aſide by *counter inclinations*, what more perſuaſive reaſon can there be, than the eternal unchangeable reaſon, or fitneſs of things?—*It is fit to be done, therefore God does it.*—Is not this way of ſpeaking more reſpectful to the Deity, than if it ſhould be ſaid, *he does this, not becauſe it is better than the contrary would have been, but becauſe it better ſuits his inclination?* And yet this would be the plain fact, if God could *will* nothing that he was not previouſly *inclined* to, and was *inclined* to nothing but by a neceſſity of nature; ſince this would be to make *inclination* the ſole moving ſpring of *volition*. The reaſon of things apprehended by the divine mind, would not at all contribute

* All exciting reaſons preſuppoſe inſtincts and affections. *Hutcheſon of the Paſſions*, p. 216. 'Tis plain if the Deity had nothing eſſential to his nature, correſponding to our ſweeteſt and moſt kind affections, we can ſcarce ſuppoſe he could have any reaſon exciting him to any thing he hath done. *Id. p.* 239.

bute towards it; for if it hath any degree of influence, ſo as to bear but a third or fourth part in determining the *will*, it may as well determine it wholly, there being no more contradiction, that the two or three remaining parts which go to complete the *volition*, ſhould proceed from a regard to the reaſon of things, than the one or two that are ſuppoſed to do ſo. Whatever hath any, though never ſo inconſiderable, weight, may have its *momentum* increaſed, till it is ſufficient to break the ballance.

Sect. V. It is poſſible then, for God to act without any other reaſon or motive, than the intrinſick *beauty* and *goodneſs* of the action. And if this be poſſible, then thus it is we ought to think he acts, as well on ſuppoſition of a *prevening inclination*, as of none. He will, indeed, on the former ſuppoſition, act with *inclination*, but not from it, as the proper ultimate reaſon of *volition*, any more than on the latter. Did he act from *inclination*, in the ſenſe now explained, or ſo as that to ſuch like queſtions as theſe, *Why does God favour the righteous more than the wicked? Why is he faithful to his promiſes?* &c. no further anſwer was to be returned, than becauſe he was *inclined* to it, or becauſe it was neceſſary for ſome end (as for inſtance, the bringing about the publick happineſs of the rational ſyſtem) which he was *inclined* to promote

promote without any reaſon; in this caſe the *wiſdom*, *equity*, and *goodneſs* of divine Providence being only occaſioned by the neceſſary co-incidence of the diſpoſitions of a perfect nature with the nature of things, the diſpenſations of God's Providence would be no otherwiſe wiſe, and juſt, and good, than they would be without his *conſciouſneſs*, or *knowledge*, of this co-incidence, which is not the ground, or reaſon of his proceedings. As certainly therefore, as all the ways of God are wiſe, and righteous, and good, they are the reſult of *wiſdom*, and not of *unguided inclination*. The ſame *wiſdom* that diſcovers the preferableneſs of one end, one ſcheme, one method to another, is inducement enough to a Being, in whom there is the moſt perfect rectitude of nature, to perfer that end, that ſcheme, that method in all his works.

SECT. VI. I deſire never to forget the weakneſs and narrowneſs of my mind, eſpecially when treating on matters of ſo ſublime a nature, in which I would carefully avoid being haſty and poſitive; but, after all my care, if I follow the chain of my preſent reaſonings, I am led further to think, that as there are no *propenſions* or *inclinations* in God, antecedent to, or rather independent of, his *knowledge* of the eternal and immutable relations of things, ſo nor conſequent and dependent upon this *knowledge*. The progreſs

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is not from a clear view of what is beſt to an *inclination* towards it, and from thence, by another and diſtinct ſtep to *volition*; but, if it be of ſomething which God ſees fit to be immediately done, the view of it immediately iſſues in *volition*, without any *intervening inclination*; if of ſomething fit to be done, but not preſently, the view of it is neither followed with *inclination* or *volition*, but only with a *purpoſe* of doing it when it ſhall be proper; or, to ſpeak more ſtrictly, is attended with a *complacential thought*, that when the fulneſs of time is come for doing it, ſuch is the unchangeable perfection of his nature, he ſhall certainly *will* to do it. I freely own for myſelf, that I am not able to ſeparate an *inclination* to actions, that are not to be done till numberleſs ages are paſt, from ſomething of uneaſineſs. And, were it otherwiſe, yet to what purpoſe ſhould we ſuppoſe an *inclination* ſo long before it paſſes into *volition?* And I will add, why a *moment* before, if not from *eternity?* That is, why at all?

SECT. VII. It may be proper to take notice, that in repreſenting the view of what is fit to be immediately done as immediately connected in God with the act of *volition*, my deſign was only to exclude *inclination* from being a ſort of *medium* between theſe two, not every thing elſe whatſoever. *Inclination*, I think, is evidently ſhut out, but not ſuch a

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joy or *pleaſure* as is worthy of God, and eſſential to his happineſs. The ſupreme Being is, in *Scripture*, ſtiled *the bleſſed God*; μακαριος, *happy*; with which agrees the common ſenſe of mankind, that he is as much happier as he is greater than all other Beings. And what is the happineſs of the Deity, but the pleaſure or ſatisfaction he injoys? And of what nature and kind is this pleaſure; and where ſhall we find the ſource of it? Is it a mere confuſed ſenſation of delight, that hath its foundation in inſtinct and temper only, being without any proper motive to it, or object about which it is exerciſed? The mind recoils at the bare mention of ſuch an abſurd ſuppoſition; and yet as abſurd as the notion of *blind ſenſation* in the Deity may appear, it is not more ſo, than that of *blind inclinations*; they are fit company one for the other.

Shall we ſay then, that the happineſs of the Deity hath its original from *knowledge* and *reflection?* So our nobleſt pleaſures have; and ſurely then, much more the exalted pleaſures of the ſupreme mind; particularly, from the ſurvey of his own ideas, and the relations exiſting between them. Theſe relations are infinite, whence reſults an infinite number of truths, the contemplation of which, in the vaſt variety of their combinations and dependences, muſt give infinite delight. Truths merely *ſpeculative* are fruitful of pleaſure; how much more *practical* truths, or thoſe

that concern a *right conduct*, whether in God himſelf, or in his reaſonable creatures. The fitneſſes of action as they lie before him in one boundleſs proſpect, cannot but be attended with unconceivable pleaſure, which pleaſure muſt be heightened by the knowledge he hath, that there is nothing, and can be nothing, to draw him aſide into actions contrary to the fitneſs of things, and that therefore he ſhall ever act as becomes a Being of infinite perfection. This he knows with the ſame certainty as he knows the fitneſs of things; and from his knowledge of theſe fitneſſes, and the pleaſure he receives from his knowledge, we may be aſſured, that God in every inſtance will act after this manner.

The very ſuppoſition that God hath pleaſure in beholding theſe moral fitneſſes, ſhews that he can need no other motive to do what is fit, than his knowledge that it is ſo. The pleaſure he takes in any truth muſt be agreeable to the nature of that truth; that is, the truth being *moral* or *practical* (a propoſition rightly affirming an action to be better than its contrary, or than the omiſſion of it) the pleaſure muſt ariſe from the conſideration of it under this notion. And if God takes a pleaſure in beholding what is fit to be done as ſuch, when he further ſees that this or that is fit to be done by him, he cannot, when it comes to be thus fit, but *will* to do it, and take a pleaſure in doing it. We have here then

then a double pleaſure, one reſulting from the contemplation of moral fitneſſes, the other from acting according to them, which, perhaps, is no more than a continuation of that pleaſure which God receives from the knowledge that he ſhall always ſo act. A wiſe Being hath great pleaſure in acting wiſely, and in the aſſurance that he ſhall act thus on all occaſions, and the more wiſely he acts, and the greater his aſſurance of his continuing to do ſo, the greater that pleaſure; and therefore greateſt of all, where the *wiſdom* is infinite and unchangeable. But then this pleaſure is not properly the cauſe of God's acting wiſely, becauſe the very ground of that pleaſure which accompanies the divine actions, is his acting in the manner he does, becauſe it is acting wiſely, or according to the reaſon and nature of things as the conſtant motive of his actions.

SECT. VIII. Upon the whole, I would diſtinguiſh what is leſs evident from what is more ſo. That *there are no inclinations in God at all, diſtinct from his actual volitions* is to me ſo evident, as hardly to leave any doubt about it in my mind. That *there are no ſuch inclinations, as depend not upon any previous acts of the underſtanding*, is ſtill more evident, and the proof of it more eaſily apprehended. But what is moſt evident of all, and ought in my judgment to be out of queſtion among

thoſe, who would think in the leaſt honourably of God, and not give up all his moral perfections, is, That *there are eſſential and everlaſting fitneſſes in things and actions, which being perfectly known to God, are the true and invariable reaſons of his conduct.*—From this Principle the following *Corollaries* are naturally deduced.

CHAP. III.

Firſt COROLLARY.

SECT. I. *THERE can be no ſuch unbounded liberty in the will of God as ſome have advanced*, who (for what end was beſt known to themſelves) have talked deceitfully of God, and complimented him with an abſolute empire over truth and falſhood, over good and evil. "It is repugnant to Reaſon" (ſaith a celebrated * Philoſopher) "that the "*will* of God ſhould not from eternity have "been *indifferent* to all things, which are or "ever ſhall be, becauſe there is nothing good "or true, nothing to be believed, or done, "or omitted, the idea of which was in the "divine intellect, before his *will* determined "to effect it ſuch as it is. Neither do I here "ſpeak of priority of time, ſince it was not "there by a priority of order or nature, *i. e.* "ſo

* Deſcartes Reſpon. ad Sext. Object. Sect. 6.

" ſo as that the idea of goodneſs moved God
" to chooſe one thing rather than another.
" *e. g.* He did not therefore *will* to create the
" world in time, becauſe he ſaw this to be
" better, than if he had created it from
" eternity; nor did he *will* that the three
" angles of a triangle ſhould be equal to two
" right, becauſe he knew that it could not
" be otherwiſe; but on the contrary, becauſe
" he *willed* to create the world in time,
" therefore this is better than if he had crea-
" ted it from eternity, and becauſe he *willed*
" that the three angles of a triangle, ſhould
" be neceſſarily equal to two right, therefore
" this is now true, and cannot be otherwiſe;
" and ſo of the reſt. And thus this perfect
" *indifference* in God, is a moſt complete
" argument of his omnipotence. But as to
" man, finding the nature of all that is good
" or true already determined by God, and
" unchangeably ſo, it is manifeſt that he does
" the more readily, and conſequently, the
" more freely embrace any good or truth,
" the more clearly he apprehends it, and that
" he is never *indifferent*, but when he is igno-
" rant which is the truer or better, or at leaſt
" doth not ſee it ſo clearly but that there is
" ſome room for doubting. And thus the
" *indifference* belonging to human liberty is
" quite another thing from that which agrees
" to the divine."

Sect. II. In this paſſage we find all truth, whether *ſpeculative* or *practical*, (or *truth* and *goodneſs)* is intirely ſubjected to the free determination of God. The particular inſtance of a thing fit to be done is not very well choſen, it being a diſputable point, whether it was poſſible, in the nature of the thing, for the world to have been created from eternity, and the creating of it ſooner or later in time being, perhaps, a matter of arbitrary choice. But ſince the aſſertion is univerſal that there is nothing good or true, to be believed, or done, or omitted, but the *will* of God was from eternity *indifferent* to it, we have a right to ſuppoſe, that if it had come into the Author's head, he would not have ſcrupled to ſay, that *fidelity* would have been no better than *perfidiouſneſs*, *mercy* than *cruelty*, *univerſal benevolence* than *univerſal malice*, if God, of his own *free-will*, had not made them better. I am pleaſed, however, to ſee theſe two ſorts of truth placed upon the ſame foot; it rejoices me to hear that the truth of this Propoſition, *the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right*, is not more neceſſary and unchangeable than the *goodneſs* of ſome actions; and that nothing could have hindered the one from being what it is, but a power that had the ſame abſolute dominion over the other. Only grant me that moral fitneſs is as eſſential to ſome actions, as the property

property now mentioned is to a triangle, and I desire no more. That *there are eternal and necessary truths, which always were, and always will be the same, and could not possibly have been otherwise*, is as plain as that there is any such thing as *truth*; since nothing could be proved, if something were not self-evident, and what is self-evident could not be made so, because then we could not know whether it is so or no, till we had first proved, that it was the *will* of God, that the truth of it should be self-evident. And some Propositions being self-evident, the evidence of others is demonstrative, and so resolves into self-evidence; a demonstration being a chain of ideas, in which the connexion between every particular link, and the next following is evident of itself, or without any proof. That there are likewise *moral truths* which have the same immutable necessity, was attempted to be proved in the *two first Chapters*, and appears to me in the same full light, as that there are *mathematical truths* of this kind. The nature of *justice* and *injustice*, *gratitude* and *ingratitude*, *goodness* and *malice*, *sincerity* and *fraud*, being no more liable to change, than those of a *triangle*, a *square*, and a *circle*; and having the same invariable relation of agreement or disagreement with a Being possessed of freedom and intelligence, as these several figures have one with another. Nor is it a real lessening to the true liberty of

the *will* of God, that he cannot *arbitrarily* make *good* to be *evil*, and *evil* to be *good*, any more than it is to the *power* of God that he cannot make *truth* and *falſhood* to be the ſame thing.

SECT. III. *Hobbs* is not quite ſo liberal to the Creator and Governor of the world as *Deſcartes*, yet he too talks in a ſtrain that is ſure high enough. *A right to do all things, does eſſentially and neceſſarily adhere to the power of doing them* *; that is, in plain engliſh, God hath power to damn his innocent creatures everlaſtingly, therefore he hath a *right* to do it; his mere *power* to deceive his creatures, by acting directly contrary to all the aſſurances and revelations of his mind that he hath given, or can poſſibly give them, is not to be queſtioned, therefore his *right* to deceive them is alſo unqueſtionable. And if there be no difference between *phyſical* and *moral power*, or between *mere power* and *right* (as we have Mr. *Hobb*'s word for it there is not) we have then no abſolute ſecurity that God will not thus act; and how much better, I pray, is the *ſovereignty* aſcribed by ſome to the moſt excellent of all Beings than this monſtrous, this boundleſs *right* of *Hobbs?* For my part, I cannot ſee wherein they differ; ſince each, like a vaſt abyſs, ſwallows up, without diſtinction, every thing that is thrown into it. In all

* De Cive, *l.* 1. *cap.* 1. § 14.

all likelihood, *Hobbs* had never thought of that abſurd notion, or would have been aſhamed to broach it, if the then reigning Syſtems in Divinity, had not given authority to that and ſeveral other parts of his wild ſcheme of Religion, Morality, and Politicks.

SECT. IV. Some of late, who are far from believing *Cartes*'s *omnipotence*, or *Hobb*'s *right*, and would entertain the ſuppoſition of God's devoting a world of innocent creatures to everlaſting miſery and torments with the utmoſt abhorrence, will not, however, allow that *one thing is in itſelf fitter than another*; ſo that, if they abhor the ſuppoſition juſt now put, it is not an abhorence of *reaſon* (according to their own account of it) but of *mechaniſm*, like thoſe which we call *natural antipathies*. The *will* of God they will tell you, is not guided by any ſuch rule, as fit and unfit *. "What is the reaſon," (ſaith an ingenious perſon in this way of thinking) "why "God ſhould communicate happineſs to the "good and innocent? Will you ſay, that the "reaſon for it is, that ſuch a procedure is "agreeable, and the contrary oppoſite to the "nature of things? If ſo, I ſhould then aſk, "to what things is ſuch a procedure agreeable "to the nature of? Is it to that of the crea-"tures? Is it agreeable to their nature as "ſenſible Beings? It is certainly pleaſing to "them

* Divine Benevolence, *p.* 21.

" them as ſuch; but this is intirely beſides " the queſtion, and abſtracting from this " ſenſe of the word, I don't ſee but that " pain and miſery is as agreeable to the nature " of a ſenſible Being, as pleaſure and happi- " neſs." But, with this Gentleman's leave, I would aſk, how long a *ſenſible*, and an *innocent* Being, have been equivalent terms? The queſtion was concerning communicating happineſs to a *good* and *innocent* Being; and certainly, in the nature of the things, there is a greater agreement between *innocence* and *happineſs*, than between *innocence* and *miſery*, were it for no other reaſon but this, that the happineſs of an *innocent* Being, muſt, *in part*, ariſe out of his *innocence* or *goodneſs* itſelf, while his miſery muſt be wholly *external*, and ſo (if not grounded in a miſtake) not only ſuit but ill with his *innocence*, but, like a *negative quality*, help to deſtroy the ſatisfaction that flowed from the conſciouſneſs of it; for inward ſatisfaction may be ſo equally ballanced with outward pain, as taken with that, to have no more value than non-exiſtence, or ſo over-ballanced as to be unſpeakably worſe than that. If any one ſaith, that he cannot ſee how happineſs agrees better with *innocence* than miſery does, I can only wiſh him a better eye-ſight. Should this Author, upon ſecond thoughts, ſay, that tho' there is no reaſon why God ſhould communicate happineſs to the *good* and *innocent*, yet there are plain

plain reaſons, why he ſhould not inflict miſery, I ſhall think it a conſiderable gain to have this one moral fitneſs granted me, and laying this for a foundation, make no doubt of raiſing a ſuperſtructure of many other moral fitneſſes upon it.

SECT. V. The ſame Author adds, a few lines after this, " I do not find (I am ſorry " to ſay it) any neceſſary connexion between " mere intelligence, tho' ever ſo great, and " the love or approbation of kind and bene- " ficent actions." And I, in my turn, am heartily glad to hear him ſay, that he is *ſorry* not to find this connexion not only as his *good nature* breaks out in this expreſſion, but as it is a confeſſion, of which he himſelf was not aware, of the *intrinſick excellence* of beneficent actions. He is *ſorry* not to diſcern a connexion between the higheſt degree of intelligence, and the approbation of kind and beneficent actions? Why ſo? But becauſe he is inwardly conſcious (as indeed every man muſt be who hath not debauched his reaſon, and much more one of our Author's virtue and good ſenſe) that ſuch actions greatly deſerve approbation. For if they do not deſerve approbation, there is no cauſe for ſorrow, that mere intelligence or reaſon would not lead any one to approve them. But, if they deſerve love and approbation, as this Author doth in a manner confeſs, certainly the ſame intelli-

intelligence which diſcovers the merit of ſuch actions, as the higheſt intelligence cannot but do, muſt needs approve them, and delight in doing them, if there be no oppoſite principle to counteract it, which there is not in God.

Sect. VI. It is a ſtrange queſtion for any thinking man and lover of virtue to aſk, but which I have heard ſome ſuch ſeriouſly put, who were very well able to have anſwered it themſelves, *You talk of the fitneſſes of things, pray, what are theſe fitneſſes fit for?* If I miſtake not, I have ſhewn before that they are fit to ingage the approbation of the greateſt and wiſeſt of all Beings; as, in the *ſecond part* of this *Eſſay*, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, that they are well fitted to awaken the attention, and to attract the love and eſteem, of all intelligent agents whatſoever. They are a much fitter rule, ſurely, for a reaſonable Being to act by than mere *inclination*, be it never ſo right, which yet is the only thing by which theſe Gentlemen will allow the *will* of God to be bounded. I cannot forbear aſking this new ſort of advocates for virtue and benevolence, *Is not one action better than another?* Tho', I know, they will preſently return upon me, *For what, and for whom is it better?* To which I anſwer without any manner of heſitation, it is better with regard to the agent himſelf, not excepting the ever bleſſed God. Doing good to thoſe that are good, and to the innocent,

innocent, is a better work in itſelf, and better ſuits the perfections of the divine nature, than cauſeleſly and needleſly putting them to pain. It is a better imployment of that *infinite power*, which is under the direction of *infinite wiſdom*, than the contrary; better fitted to yield a reaſonable, I ſhould have ſaid a divine ſatisfaction. Will it be ſaid that nothing can be fit that is *impoſſible*; but that it is *impoſſible*, without *inclination*, for the Divine Being himſelf to act one way or another? Why, placing the thing in this light, it is, it ſeems, fit that the ſovereign Being, having an inclination to do good, ſhould do good, and not evil; and that, in doing it, he ſhould have an eye to the fitneſs of it. But I argue further, that if one action be fitter and better than another, ſuppoſing only that it is *poſſible*, then the approbation and choice of it can never be *impoſſible* to a Being that clearly perceives that fitneſs, and hath nothing to corrupt its judgment, and pervert its choice; which is evidently the caſe, with reſpect to the ſupreme Being. He hath a natural power of chooſing, and can actually exerciſe this power, whenever a ſufficient motive is not wanting, as ſuch a motive to action can never be wanting where the action hath an apparent fitneſs, and there is no wrong biaſs to divert and reſtrain the choice of it.

SECT.

SECT. VII. After all that I have ſaid to prove, that *the will of God is in ſome ſenſe limited by the nature of things*, ſo that he can no more *will* to do ſome things on account of their unfitneſs, than he can to do others, becauſe he knows them to be *phyſically impoſſible*, I am far from ſaying, that a *liberty of indifference* can never agree to the *will* of God, as ſome learned men have done, alledging this argument for it, *that God can never act without a ſufficient reaſon*. If there can be inſtances aſſigned of things in their nature *indifferent*, in all ſuch inſtances, the *will* of God muſt be perfectly *indifferent* with regard to ſuch things. And, for aught I know, there may be things of this nature, and the following may be inſtances of it, *viz. whether the world ſhould be created in one part of ſpace or another*; *of ſuch a determinate quantity of matter, or a few particles more or leſs*. Yet even here, I muſt beg leave to obſerve, that, according to what appears to me, the *will* of God hath no power over the *nature* of theſe things, ſo, as by prefering one of two *indifferent things*, to make that become better than the other; but what was in its nature *indifferent* before, does in its nature continue the ſame ſtill. If there was nothing to determine the divine election to that part of ſpace, and that quantity of matter, which he made choice of in creating the world, before the world was created, then that part of ſpace, and that quantity

quantity of matter, being chosen, are not now better than any other; since nothing in that particular division of space or portion of matter, was the reason of its being chosen, and no change hath happened in the nature of space and matter themselves; space and matter being in themselves the same, whether a world exists in such a part of space, and having such particular bounds and limits, or no.

To conclude—I shall venture to lay down this as a just idea of the *divine liberty*, viz. the intire dominion of the *supreme mind* over his own actions. He who is infinite in power cannot be over-ruled by any external force to do what he would not do, if left to himself; nor can he be tempted to do evil, by a fallacious appearance of things to his understanding; or by inclinations not subject to Reason: his infinite wisdom securing him against the first, and his having no inclinations at all, to be sure none that are wrong, against the latter. It is absolutely certain, that God judges every thing to be as it is, and the contrary naturally impossible. That, having no motive to act otherwise, he will always do that which he judges best to be done is *morally certain*, the contrary may be said to be *morally impossible*. So the scripture says that it is *impossible for God to lie*. So we are used to say, that it is *impossible this* or *that should be*, meaning, that it cannot be supposed without the greatest absurdity. And if, in any case, this expression be allowable, it

it is in this; ſince we might with much leſs abſurdity, conceive all the intelligent Beings throughout the univerſe to agree in affirming a known falſhood, without any the leaſt temptation for doing it, than that the conduct of the Divine Being, ſhould in a ſingle inſtance, contradict the counſel of his infinite and unerring wiſdom. A *natural power* in God, in its abſtract conſideration, extending alike to all actions whatſoever, is not denied. But, as it has been very well obſerved, a *moral action is the exerciſe of a natural capacity, under the direction of a moral judgment.* Now the *power* of God being under the direction of infinite *wiſdom*, and there being no counter-inclination to draw his *will* aſide, tho' God acts with perfect freedom, ſo as to determine himſelf with the utmoſt complacency, yet that determination, where there is a right on one ſide, and a wrong on the other, is as certain as if it was *phyſically neceſſary.* Were there no direction at all of any kind there could be no action; and where the direction lies all one way, the action will certainly be that way. This is not the only inſtance wherein one perfection of the divine nature is, in the exerciſe of it, limited by another. There is in God a *vis motrix*, a locomotive power; yet ſuch is the perfection of his nature, that he cannot exert this power, in regard of himſelf, becauſe of his *immenſity.* There is indeed this difference between the latter

latter caſe and the former, that the reſtraint laid by the *omnipreſence* of God upon his *power* to move from one place to another is *natural*, whereas that which the *wiſdom* of God puts upon his *power to do wrong* is of a *moral kind*; but in both caſes the effect is alike certain. I ſhall not, therefore, ſcruple to affirm, that the moſt perfect freedom of which we can have any idea, is the *power* which the wiſeſt of all Beings hath to act in all caſes as his *wiſdom* directs, without any the leaſt interruption or controul.

SECT. VIII. Here I intended to have paſt on to another *Corollary*, but having met with a Diſcourſe *, publiſhed not long ſince, in which the ingenious Author hath advanced *two notions*, on which he ſeems to lay no little ſtreſs, I ſhall take leave to ſtop ſo long as briefly to examine them. The *firſt* of theſe notions is, *That there not only may be, and even are, numberleſs inſtances, both in the natural and moral world, of things perfectly equal; but that it is neceſſary, and of the greateſt importance, for the honour of God, and as the ground of our obligation to his goodneſs, that there ſhould be, and that we ſhould believe there are ſo.* This Author does himſelf allow that the *will* of God, whereſoever there is a ſuperior

 fitneſs,

* An Eſſay on the freedom of the Will in God, and in creatures. See Sec. 5. of that Diſcourſe, particularly *p.* 60.

fitneſs, is determined by that fitneſs; and ſaith, "that for God to act an unfit thing "would be unwiſe, and to act a thing which "is evil would not be good;" from whence it neceſſarily follows, that ſuppoſing the nature of things to be ſuch, that to an *infinite underſtanding* there muſt always appear a reaſon for chooſing one thing rather than another, tho' God, as a wiſe and good Being, could not, upon this ſuppoſition, in any one inſtance, chooſe to act otherwiſe than he does, yet this would be no manner of diminution of his glory; unleſs it be more for the glory of God to act without a reaſon than with one, only to ſhew his *ſovereignty* and *dominion*. The queſtion therefore at bottom, is about a matter of fact *(viz.* whether the reaſons are ſo exactly equal for chooſing this or that in a multitude of caſes, that God's preference of one to the other is *purely arbitrary)* upon which it ſeems to me of little conſequence which way we decide, or whether we decide at all, one way or the other; ſince God as properly determines himſelf, when he hath a reaſon for his choice, as when he hath none. Nor are we leſs obliged to be thankful for the favours God confers upon us, in one caſe than in the other. Have I received very great and apparent benefits? Were they deſigned as ſuch? And altogether unmerited on my part? Certainly then, without inquiring whether God had his reaſons for doing ſo much

much for me as he hath done, or for doing more for me than he hath for another, I cannot but acknowledge that I am under the ſtrongeſt engagements to love and gratitude.

According to this Author's rate of reaſoning, if of three perſons (whom we will call *A*, *B*, and *C*) *C* hath been favoured as much more than *B* as *A* hath been leſs, will not the compariſon with *C*, take away from the obligation that *B* is under to thankfulneſs as much as the compariſon with *A* inhances it? Had the degree of favour to *A* and *B* been the ſame as to *C*, would *C*, who now beholds *A* and *B* below him on the ſcale of benefits, have been leſs in debt to the *goodneſs* of God, tho' injoying all the ſame bleſſings and favours as now, only becauſe he would have ſeen *A* and *B* upon the ſame foot with himſelf? On the contrary, the happineſs of a generous mind being increaſed by company, that which makes *C* happier, *viz.* the happineſs of *A* and *B*, ought not, one would think, to leſſen his thankfulneſs.—But ought we not to take notice, with the livelieſt ſentiments of gratitude, of God's having *choſen* us to be the objects of his diſtinguiſhing goodneſs, *paſſing by* others? And is not this motive to gratitude frequently inſiſted upon in Scripture? I own it; and it is what the examples produced by this Author put out of all doubt. But what then? It is to be hoped the ground of our thankfulneſs is not that God hath *paſt by* others, but that,

paſſing by them, he hath *choſen* us, who might likewiſe have been excluded, for any *proper claim* we have to higher degrees of favour. *Merit* we have none any more than they; and, as for any other reaſons, however proper and effectual they might be, to move an infinitely wiſe God, they do not, by being arguments of his *wiſdom*, depreciate from his *goodneſs*, or leſſen our *obligations* to it.

Will they who ſhall be living upon earth, when the Goſpel is become the Religion of all mankind, have leſs reaſon to be thankful for this *unſpeakable gift* than we have, merely becauſe it will then be a *common bleſſing*, like the light of the ſun, and not, as now, a *diſtinguiſhing privilege?* Or is there juſt cauſe why any chriſtian nation ſhould be more ſparing of their praiſes and acknowledgements to God for giving them the Goſpel, becauſe he hath not given it to them *only?* I cannot help ſuſpecting that ſuch thoughts proceed from the prejudices of *education*, by which a man hath been taught, in order to magnify the *Grace* of God the more, to narrow the *bounds* of it; which is ſuch a ſtrange way of magnifying the *Grace* of God as no one, without *inſtruction*, would have readily thought on. And if this was the motive to God's making uſe of this diſcriminating method in placing his favours, that his *Grace* would hereby appear the more illuſtrious (not indeed in itſelf, but with regard to thoſe few, that happen to be

be the objects of it) which seems to be the opinion of some, will it not be unaccountable that the same motive did not induce him to confine his goodness to a *single object*, that being the way to exalt it to the highest pitch of all?

SECT. IX. The other notion in that Treatise, which I cannot come in with, is, *That where one thing is no better than another before a choice is made of it, that choice makes it better to the chooser; so that God himself by choosing any scheme or mediums, though antecedently no way preferable to other schemes and mediums, which he does not choose, renders that scheme and those mediums fit, and good, and agreeable* *. Here I am apt to think, the ingenious Author deceived himself, or rather was deceived by Bishop *King*, for want of attending to an obvious distinction, between the *absolute* and *respective* goodness or fitness of two or more schemes or mediums, which lie before the view of an intelligent agent. The *absolute* goodness of any scheme is that which makes it fit to be chosen, if there be no superior reason against it. The *respective* goodness is its eligibleness above other schemes, that is, the *excess* of its *absolute* goodness above theirs. Consequently, where the *absolute* goodness of two schemes is *equal*, neither of them is *respectively* good and fit; nor can

* p. 86.

poſſibly become ſo by being choſen. And what then ſhould make it good and agreeable to the chooſer? Upon the account of its *abſolute* goodneſs it may be agreeable; but then, foraſmuch as this does not exceed the *abſolute* goodneſs of the ſcheme unchoſen, the plain and intire reaſon of its being agreeable is its *abſolute* fitneſs to be choſen, not its being choſen rather than another *equally* fit. But the agent hath choſen it, and is therefore pleaſed with it. What, is he pleaſed that he hath choſen *that* and not the *other?* That cannot be, if he knows that one is no better than the other, and is not influenced in his choice, by a particular and unaccountable fancy for one above the other; which, though it may be frequently fact, in reſpect of ſuch compounded and imperfect Beings as we are, cannot, without detracting from the ſimplicity and perfection of his nature, be ſuppoſed of God; not to add, that where there is ſuch a *partial fancy*, the agreeableneſs of the thing does not ariſe from our having actually choſen it, but from the fancy we have for it, which is the true reaſon of our choice.

Second COROLLARY.

THE *divine rectitude is a complex term, including ſeveral ideas under it*; as, for inſtance, a *negative rectitude*, in oppoſition to every wrong inclination; *rectitude of judg-*

ment,

ment, in oppoſition to all ignorance and miſtake about *right* and *wrong*, whether in reſpect of the actions and operations of the Deity himſelf, or the actions and operations of his free creatures; *a rectitude of will*, denoting an invariable determination of the *will* by a *right judgment*, in oppoſition to a *will* that is capable of being determined without, or contrary to ſuch a *judgment*; and finally, a *rectitude of delight*, ſignifying that as ſome things are fit to be delighted in, others not, ſo God is delighted in that, and nothing elſe, which is a proper foundation and object of delight, and that his delight is always proportionable to the occaſion, and the value of the object, in oppoſition to a ſatisfaction or delight that is unreaſonable, becauſe miſplaced as to the object, or exceſſive as to the degree. All theſe are comprehended in the *rectitude of the divine nature*; the inſeparable effect of which is a *rectitude in the divine conduct and government*; by which *rectitude*, beſides his never doing any thing that had better not be done, is further meant his doing every thing that is fit and becoming him to do. The aſſurance we have of this (the *rectitude of the divine nature* being preſuppoſed) is the infinite *power*, or *all-ſufficiency* of God. He cannot be controuled or over-ruled in any of his deſigns; to him it can never be difficult and painful to do any thing that is *poſſible*; he wants nothing, and he fears nothing, and therefore

can have no inducement to do what he otherwiſe would not, or to leave undone what he ſhould elſe have choſen to do, only for the ſake of his eaſe, and to ſecure his own private intereſt and happineſs.

Third COROLLARY.

SECT. I. *THE moral attributes of God are only divers ways of conſidering the will of God, as invariably and delightfully determined by his wiſdom, to that which is beſt in all poſſible circumſtances.* The *attributes* that go under this name of *moral*, are *goodneſs*, *juſtice*, *truth* and *faithfulneſs*. *Goodneſs* is the *will* of God invariably and delightfully determined by his *wiſdom* to the communication of *being* and *happineſs*, becauſe it is fit, and as far as is fit. — *Juſtice* is the *will* of God invariably and delightfully determined by his *wiſdom* to maintain right and order, and, for this end and purpoſe, to do all that is neceſſary to convince his reaſonable creatures of the regard he hath to the preſervation of his own rights, and of theirs.—*Truth*, or *ſincerity*, is the *will* of God invariably and delightfully determined by his *wiſdom* to avoid uſing all ſigns, in his intercourſes with his intelligent creatures, from which they may not only take occaſion, without neceſſity, to deceive themſelves, but would have juſt ground to charge him, with being their deceiver, having a meaning

meaning to himſelf quite different from that which the words, or other ſigns, he made uſe of, naturally ſuggeſted, and were intended to ſuggeſt *. —— *Faithfulneſs* is the *will* of God invariably and delightfully determined by his *wiſdom* to make good all his *promiſes* and *engagements*. — The *holineſs* of God ſeems to ſtand for all theſe perfections in *conjunction*, he being by theſe perfections ſeparated from all ſociety and friendſhip with falſe gods, as his people were to be from the worſhip and worſhippers of theſe falſe deities, and from all imitation of them in their wicked lives, their ſuperſtitious rights and cuſtoms, and impious devotion, and upon that account called *a holy people*.

SECT. II. From this general account of God's *moral attributes*, it follows that we have clear, diſtinct and proper ideas of the *moral attributes* of the divine nature; that, notwithſtanding the diverſity of the objects, the principle of all theſe *attributes* is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, one and the ſame, *viz.* God's *knowledge* of,

* Can the Deity lie by objecting to the mind a falſe image, either by words or things?——Of what uſe can a lie be to him? Can he be driven to it by the fear of enemies? Or need it to ſerve his friends? —— There being *no reaſon* why God ſhould lie, we ought to conclude the nature of the Gods is free of this imputation. God is true in words and actions, is neither changed himſelf, nor deceives others, whether by viſions, or voices, or ſigns, whether ſleeping or waking. *Plat. de Repub. Dial.* 2.

of, and *delight* in that which is good and fit: in a word, that *infinity* may be predicated of the *moral*, as well as of the other *attributes* of God, as we further learn in what ſenſe it may be ſo.

SECT. III. 1. *We have clear, diſtinct, and proper, tho' not adequate ideas of the moral attributes of God.* I am ſenſible, this is very diſagreeable doctrine to the diſciples of a certain *Reformer*, who will not allow that our notions of *juſtice and goodneſs*, do at all agree to theſe *attributes* as they are in the Deity; in whom they ſignify ſomething, of which we have only a confuſed, or rather no apprehenſion, and exceeding different from what they do when aſcribed to men. And, the truth is, as long as they reſolve to give ſuch repreſentations of the *decrees* of God, of his *works*, and of, what they call, his *glory*, as they univerſally do, they are perfectly in the right of it, to take it for a thing granted, that we have no *proper* idea of theſe *moral perfections* (tho', they would do ſtill better to *prove* it too, if they could) ſince they muſt be conſcious of its being a deſperate undertaking to reconcile the divine proceedings, according to their ſcheme of them, with the conceptions which all mankind, not excepting thoſe who have improved their Reaſon to the higheſt degree, have of *juſtice* and *goodneſs*. And not only theſe men, but others too, who know how

how to reaſon admirably well upon the *attributes* of God when they pleaſe, have, as often as a different purpoſe was to be ſerved, talked in the ſame ſtrain.

SECT. IV. Biſhop *King* is the man who hath moſt diſtinguiſhed himſelf on this head. It is true, his diſcourſe does particularly concern the *fore-knowledge* of God; but then, he lays down ſuch unlimited aſſertions, that no reader can forbear concluding from them, that his opinion was the ſame of the *moral attributes* as of the reſt; notwithſtanding his not particularly inſiſting upon them. "Thoſe "powers, properties, and operations, the "names of which we transfer to God, are "(ſaith he) but faint ſhadows and reſem-"blances, or rather indeed *emblems* and *pa-"rabolical figures* of the divine attributes "which they are deſigned to ſignify. — A "map is only paper and ink diverſified with "ſeveral ſtrokes and lines which in them-"ſelves have very little likeneſs to earth, "mountains, valleys, lakes and rivers. Yet "none can deny but by proportion and ana-"logy, they are very inſtructive; and if any "ſhould imagine that theſe countries are "really paper, becauſe the maps that repre-"ſent them are made of it, and ſhould "ſeriouſly draw concluſions from that ſup-"poſition, he would expoſe his underſtand-"ing, and make himſelf ridiculous. And

"yet

" yet ſuch as argue from the faint reſem-
" blances that either Scripture or Reaſon
" give us of the divine attributes and opera-
" tions, and proceed in their reaſonings, as
" if theſe muſt, in all reſpects, anſwer one
" another, fall into the ſame abſurdities that
" thoſe would be guilty of, who ſhould think
" that countries muſt be of paper, becauſe
" the maps that repreſent them are ſo." And, in the next paragraph, applying this general obſervation to the particular caſe of God's *decrees* and *predeſtination*, he ſaith, " We
" aſcribe theſe to God, becauſe the things
" ſignified by theſe words bear ſome reſem-
" blance to certain perfections, which we
" believe to be in him; but there is as little
" likeneſs between the one and the other, as
" between the countries and maps which re-
" preſent them *." — If, agreeably to what that *Writer* ſaith here of the *fore-knowledge* of God, it be affirmed, that there is as little likeneſs between our *ideas* of the *juſtice* and *goodneſs* of God, and the *attributes* themſelves, as between a map of a country, and the country repreſented by it (which ſeems to have been his ſenſe of the matter) I cannot but regard it as not only a very *falſe* but *dangerous* poſition. Maps are of uſe to help us in conceiving of the countries they deſcribe; becauſe, as to the ſituation and bounds of the ſeveral

* Divine Predeſtination, &c. a Sermon preached before the Houſe of Lords in *Ireland*, 1709.

ſeveral parts of the map one with regard to another, there is ſuppoſed to be an exact and proper correſpondence between the map and the country; and becauſe, as to other intentions of a map, having ſeen the earth itſelf, mountains, valleys, lakes, and rivers, any arbitrary ſign will ſerve to revive the ideas of them in our minds, which we can eaſily apply to any particular country, mountain, river, which we have not ſeen. But now ſuppoſing the firſt and only object a man had ſeen was a map, I aſk, what ſort of a repreſentation the map would be to ſuch a man? Would it anſwer the ſame ends to him it does to us? Of no more uſe would our ideas of the *divine perfections* be to us, if they were only *emblems* and *parabolical figures* of thoſe *perfections*, and repreſented them no better than a map does a country; ſince, having never converſed with the *attributes* and *perfections* themſelves, we muſt be continually and unavoidably blundering in all our contemplations and diſcourſes about them; and ſhould not, after all, know what we were to believe concerning God, or to expect from him, uſing the words *wiſdom*, *juſtice*, and *goodneſs*, without any certain ideas affixed to them. Whereas, from the account juſt before given of the *moral perfections* of God, it appears, that the general ideas of them, are as clear and diſtinct as of the ſame things when attributed to other intelligent Beings.

SECT.

Sect. V. It is very true, as theſe attributes are exerciſed and imployed in the works of God, we are often at a loſs to make a judgment of them, but then we know that the works of God cannot but be agreeable to his nature; ſo that God himſelf being *wiſe*, and *juſt*, and *good*, we may be confident that *wiſdom*, *juſtice*, and *goodneſs* belong to all his providential diſpenſations. As in the *natural world* the *wiſdom* of God is clearly ſeen in the *laws* and *phænomena* of it, with the exception of a few inſtances, which, tho' we cannot tell how they diſcover the *wiſdom* of God, we cannot prove to be inconſiſtent with it; ſo, in the *moral world*, the *wiſdom*, *juſtice*, and *goodneſs* of God ſhine out in a thouſand inſtances; and, tho' there are ſome appearances (more it muſt be confeſſed than in the *natural world)* which are not eaſy to be accounted for, perhaps not *poſſible* at preſent, yet we cannot ſay they do any of them contradict our cleareſt ideas of *wiſdom*, *juſtice*, and *goodneſs*, as ſome caſes evidently do, which may be ſuppoſed, and which therefore can never be real caſes. To annex a greater degree of miſery than of happineſs to the exiſtence of an *innocent creature* (greater, I mean, upon the whole) is repugnant to the moſt obvious ideas of *juſtice*, as inflicting the leaſt degree of miſery (tho' it were but as the duſt of the ballance compared with the happineſs which the

the creature injoyed) when it was neither *deſerved*, nor *promoted* any valuable end, would be contrary to the *wiſdom* and *goodneſs* of the infinite Being, and for this reaſon, it is not poſſible that any ſuch inſtances ſhould ever occur.

SECT. VI. It is one thing not to ſee the fitneſs of this or that apprehended part of the divine conduct, another to ſee the unfitneſs of it. The latter only is ſufficient to prove, that God is not *wiſe*, and *juſt*, and *good*; or that our ideas of *wiſdom*, *juſtice*, and *goodneſs* are wrong; or that the thing is falſely aſcribed to God. But now as to any ſuch manifeſt unfitneſs, it hath never yet been, and we may ſafely conclude, never will be proved of any one thing which God hath done, or which it is certain he will do. Difficulties there are, ſuch and ſo many, that it would be the utmoſt vanity and arrogance in any man to think of ſurmounting them. But then, theſe difficulties proceeding from our imperfect views of things, are no real objection againſt what hath been aſſerted, of our having clear ideas of the *moral attributes* of God; any more than our not being able to give a ſatisfactory account to ourſelves, of ſome things in the management of a family, a city, a kingdom, which yet may be ordered very wiſely and juſtly, becauſe we have not been let into the ſecret of affairs, and are unacquainted with the

the intereſts of the ſociety, and the characters and actions of the members of it, will prove us not to have a proper idea of the *wiſdom*, *juſtice*, and *goodneſs* which belong to the character of the maſter of a family, a magiſtrate, or a ſovereign prince; or that, becauſe we are not competent judges of the fitneſs of ſome things, there is nothing concerning which we can pronounce that it would be unfit.

Sect. VII. What we are concerned to remember is, that the larger any ſociety, and the more extenſive any plan, the leſs likely is it that we ſhould be qualified to paſs a definitive ſentence upon the wiſdom of the whole plan, or the propriety of any part; ſince to the latter it is neceſſary, that we ſhould have all the parts, even the moſt diſtant, with which ſuch a part is connected, lying before us; and to the former, that we ſhould be able to take in at once, that plan and all other plans or ſchemes with which it muſt be compared, before it can be known to be, or not to be, the beſt. *Conſequently*, as the government of a univerſe, compoſed of ſeveral worlds, is a plan or deſign, with regard to us, of a kind of infinite extent, and not to be executed, but in the courſe of many ages; creatures, like us, of narrow faculties, a very ſcanty duration, and but poorly ſituated to make obſervations, ſhould not be very haſty to reject a thing as unfit, becauſe we do not diſcern the fitneſs

fitneſs of it, and thereupon to reſolve with ourſelves that it is unworthy of God, and cannot have him for its author, altho' there be very good reaſons to demonſtrate that it is of God and not of men. The thing may be very fit, and yet the fitneſs of it not appear to us; unleſs our underſtandings are commenſurate to the natures and relations of things, and God can have no reaſons for any particular *act* or *œconomy* of Providence which lie concealed from our ſearches. Nay, ſuppoſing we are not only ignorant of any reaſons for God's acting after this or that manner, but can aſſign plauſible reaſons, why he ſhould not ſo act, yet we ought to be very ſure that theſe reaſons are at leaſt a counterpoiſe to the evidence we have of God's having really acted, or revealed his deſign to act ſo, before we determine againſt it. If inſtead of uſing this modeſt caution, we peremptorily decree, that ſuch a thing cannot be, notwithſtanding the evidence for the truth of the fact is vaſtly ſuperior to the pretended reaſons againſt the expediency of it, we are guilty of inexcuſable raſhneſs and preſumption. Whether this is not the caſe (to make the beſt of it) when men argue againſt the truth of the *Jewiſh Revelation* from the numerous *poſitive inſtitutions* which it contained, and againſt the truth of the *Chriſtian*, from its *imperfect promulgation*, may be left to every ſerious and impartial perſon to judge.

SECT. VIII. Let me add this further, that no man can be juſtified to treat the *Goſpel* as an impoſture, only for the ſake of certain repreſentations of the Deity, that paſs for *doctrines of the Goſpel*, but, after the moſt heedful examination, appear manifeſtly unfit, and therefore falſe. Be we never ſo poſitive, and upon never ſo good grounds, of the falſity of the doctrine, that will be no proof at all, that the Religion of Chriſt is falſe, if it cannot be ſhewn to be a doctrine of Chriſtianity. Is there no finding out any other meaning of the words and expreſſions of ſcripture but this, which we cannot help thinking abſurd? And is this abſurd ſenſe evidently their true one? Nothing leſs than a kind of abſolute certainty of theſe things is fit to be oppoſed to the numerous and moſt convincing arguments of the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, which will come in the way of any one that ſeeks for them. Better ſuppoſe the greater part of the chriſtian world to have been in an error, one age after another, eſpecially if the error hath not been of dangerous conſequence to *morals*, (though one would not be forward to do this) than that Chriſtianity itſelf is a mere fable and deluſion.

SECT. IX. 2. *Notwithſtanding the diverſity of the objects, the principle of God's moral perfections is one and the ſame*; viz. *his knowledge*

ledge of, and delight in, that which is right and good. What the School-Divines talk of the *identity* of the *eſſence* and *attributes*, one with another, is true enough of the *moral attributes*, in the ſenſe now aſſigned. The *identity* they meant, (if indeed they had properly any meaning) was a *metaphyſical abſtraction*, quite out of the reach of plain underſtandings, and holds alike of all the *attributes* and *operations* of the divine mind, which according to them, have no real diſtinction among themſelves; the *underſtanding* is the ſame thing as the *will* of God; and his *power* as his *holineſs*. And yet, which is a little odd, the ſame men who with ſo much zeal contend for this *unintelligible ſimplicity* in the divine nature, at other times forget themſelves ſo far as to make ſome of the *attributes* not only ſeemingly, but really, claſh and interfere with each other; while *mercy* is not to be ſatisfied without the *pardon of ſin*, nor *juſtice* and *holineſs* without exacting the *full puniſhment* of it. On one ſide is *tender compaſſion*, on the other an *unrelenting rigour*. It cannot, indeed, be denied, that they have found a way, as they think, to reconcile this difference, by ſuch an *exchange* of *perſons* between the *ſinner* and his *ſurety*, that the *ſurety* hath all the *guilt* of the *ſinner* properly transfered on him, and properly bears all the *puniſhment* due to that *guilt*; and on the other hand, the *ſinner*, united by faith to his *ſurety*, hath not

only the *effects* of his righteouſneſs, but his righteouſneſs *itſelf* imputed to him. But, I fear, if it be eſſential to the notion of *juſtice* to inſiſt on the *intire payment* of the ſinner's debt, the method of reconciliation here propoſed falls ſhort of the end aimed at by it, and ſo muſt be looked upon as of *man's deviſing*, not as the *counſel of God*. For (not to urge the abſurdity of making the ſufferings of an *innocent* perſon for a *few hours* in any proper ſenſe equal to the *puniſhment* of millions of *guilty* creatures, whoſe ſufferings being the effect of *guilt* muſt be of a quite different kind, throughout *innumerable ages*, which is much ſuch another whim, as that of crowding *eternity* into an *inſtant*; without urging of this) let it only be conſidered, that to appeaſe the *juſtice* of God, as they deſcribe it, (not as the *juſtice* of a Creator and Governor, but *analogous* to the paſſion of *revenge* in a weak man, when he hath received a perſonal injury; to appeaſe, I ſay, ſuch a *juſtice* as this) the *puniſhment* muſt not only be adequate to the *guilt* of the ſin, but muſt light on the ſinner himſelf. *Vicarious* ſufferings will never ſatisfy ſuch a *juſtice* as is rather a *phyſical affection* than a *moral attribute* under the direction of *wiſdom*. What pleaſes the offended perſon, is to ſee the offender himſelf ſmart for his fault. Or, if they will needs have it to be otherwiſe, will not the conſequence be, that, for the ſame reaſon that *juſtice* excuſes the ſinner

ſinner from ſuffering *in his own perſon*, it might, in ſuch a degree as *wiſdom* ſhould judge proper, abate of the *puniſhment?*

SECT. X. But now, as the *unity* of God's *moral perfections* is an eaſy intelligible notion, as before explained, ſignifying nothing elſe, but their being connected together by one general idea, and reſolved into one common principle, *viz.* the *will* of God directed by his *wiſdom*, or a *wiſe love* of all that is good, according to the degree of its goodneſs, and of nothing elſe; in which reſpect it differs widely from the inexplicable divinity of the Schools; ſo this plain and ſimple way of conceiving of theſe attributes does at once ſhut out that *unyielding juſtice* which ſome have taught, and that *eaſy flexible goodneſs* that hath been dreamt of by others. *Divine juſtice* will take that way, and obſerve that degree and meaſure in *puniſhing* which *wiſdom* preſcribes, going no further than is fit; and therefore we have reaſon to think, unleſs in caſe of *final obſtinacy*, not to the extremity of things; ſince the original deſign of God, regarded only the *happineſs* of his creatures, not their *grief* and *puniſhment*, which becomes fit only thro' their voluntary abuſe of thoſe capacities of happineſs, and opportunities and advantages for obtaining it, which God hath given them. *Happineſs* (either actually injoyed, or capable of being injoyed) is the re-

mote foundation of all *moral fitneſs*; abſtracted from the connexion it hath with *happineſs*, nothing in the world is of the leaſt value. Any further therefore, than the obligations of the reaſonable creature to his Maker, for the capacities and means of happineſs, which he hath violated, render it fit and neceſſary, God will not be ſevere *to mark iniquity*. And who will pretend to ſay that this muſt always be to the extent of its *demerit?* One would rather think, that foraſmuch as the only conceivable motive to God's communicating Being was, that he might beſtow the capacities of happineſs, if the creature hath not made that uſe of theſe capacities which he ought to have done, it ſhould not be morally fit and neceſſary for God immediately to put the guilty creature out of all poſſibility of recovering that happineſs, for which it was originally intended; eſpecially, when the natural weakneſſes of the creature are ſuch, and the temptations in the midſt of which he is placed, are ſo numerous and ſtrong, as in a manner to entitle him to compaſſion; one would not think, I ſay, if we only conſidered the reaſons of things, that this ſhould be fit; as we certainly know from Revelation that God hath not proceeded with this ſeverity.

Sect. XI. Nor may we therefore regard the *goodneſs* of God, as ſuch an eaſy flexible thing as others have imagined it. God cannot

not but diſapprove every action, and much more every character, that is *morally evil*; and the queſtion is, whether as it is fit that he ſhould diſapprove it, it be not likewiſe fit and congruous, that he ſhew his diſapprobation? The diſapprobation being perfectly juſt, and relating to the creature, is it not reaſonable that the creature ſhould be made ſenſible of it, that he may be the more affected with the ſenſe of his own ill conduct? And how can this be if ſin go altogether unpuniſhed? Or if the puniſhment be next to none? Or be not diſtributed by ſome rules of proportion, ſo as that the moſt guilty ſhall be the moſt miſerable? Which yet we know is not always done in this life, there muſt therefore be a future ſtate. Nor do I ſee any neceſſity of ſuppoſing that all puniſhment hath the nature of an admonition, either to the ſufferer himſelf, whoſe amendment is deſigned by it, or by way of example to others. Did the incorrigibleneſs of the offender take away all proſpect of his profiting by his puniſhment, and we ſhould ſet aſide the conſideration of any other being concerned in the example, it ſeems highly fit that the ſinner ſhould be made to know the evil of his ways, and his having incurred the diſpleaſure of his Maker; and that in order to his knowing this, he ſhould feel it. And here it is that I ſhould place the *expediency* of puniſhment as far as it relates ſolely to the *impenitent ſinner*; not in the

bare congruity between guilt and puniſhment, but in the ſinner's knowledge of his guilt, and the deſign of his puniſhment to work in him a ſtronger conviction of it, and to expreſs the diſpleaſure of his offended Sovereign againſt him upon that account; that he may be *ſelf-condemned*, and, tho' unwillingly, do homage, in his own thoughts, to the holineſs of God, giving him alſo the glory of that goodneſs which he hath abuſed. So that, ſhould we ſuppoſe the ſinner to have loſt all conſciouſneſs of his deſerving what he ſuffers, and to eſteem his ſufferings the pure effect of arbitrary *will* and *pleaſure*, not a proof of God's abhorrence of ſin; as, on the one hand, there would be no injuſtice in the ſufferings of ſuch a ſinner, becauſe they were deſerved, ſo neither, on the other, would there be any fitneſs in them if the notion I have here offered be right.

SECT. XII. As to *vicarious* puniſhment, or puniſhment by *ſubſtitution*, the wiſdom and fitneſs of it is not difficult to be ſhewn in the *only example* we have of that kind; for there being in the ſufferings and obedience of *Chriſt*, taken in connexion with the glory that followed, a peculiar fitneſs to ſhew God's diſapprobation and abhorrence of ſin, and his approbation and love of holineſs, *Chriſt*, by his ſufferings, may very properly be ſaid *to have made ſatisfaction for ſin*; that phraſe not neceſſarily

neceſſarily implying *that Chriſt hath paid an equivalent*; but only that he hath done and ſuffered what God was pleaſed, in his infinite wiſdom, to accept in lieu of the puniſhment due to the ſinner himſelf; ſo as to require nothing further of him, in order to his obtaining a happy and glorious immortality, but his compliance with certain neceſſary terms, which the *Grace* of God will render poſſible to him. God, the wiſe and righteous Governor of the world, was ſatisfied with the death of Chriſt, as a ſufficient foundation for a new covenant, a covenant of life and immortality upon the condition of ſincere, tho' imperfect, obedience; becauſe he knew this death, with all its concomitants, was fitted to declare both his love to ſinners, and his hatred of ſin in the moſt conſpicuous manner that could have been choſen for the illuſtration of *both*; and thereby moſt effectually to anſwer, at the ſame time, all the ends and deſigns of the divine government. This I apprehend to be the ſcripture doctrine of *ſatisfaction*, in which I ſee nothing but what, inſtead of offering violence to the acknowledged principles of Reaſon, is perfectly conſonant to them.

SECT. XIII. We learn from hence in what ſenſe *infinity* may be predicated of the *moral attributes* of God; not *abſolutely* and *ſeparately* as of the reſt, but *relatively* to the

wiſdom

wiſdom of God, and the *internal energy* of his nature; both which together produce a love of adherence to that which is good, that requires (if I may ſo ſay) a more than infinite contrary attraction to overcome it. It is with relation to theſe, not to the *actual* diſplay of the *moral attributes ad extra*, that we are to eſtimate the degree of theſe *attributes*. The *attributes* exiſt in the divine nature before they are exerciſed; nor, when they are exerciſed, muſt we imagine the *effects* to be an *adequate meaſure* of the perfections themſelves; any more than from the *power* of God, which is infinite, we can infer that the things produced by it are likewiſe infinite. All the fitneſſes of things, and actions, in all poſſible circumſtances and combinations, are clearly ſeen by the divine underſtanding, *moral good* in all its excellency and beauty, and *moral evil* in all its turpitude and deformity, the intire and unchangeable difference between them; ſo that as no reaſon is to be offered againſt the one and for the other, none can be offered by means of any change that can happen out in the courſe of everlaſting ages. This proſpect of the divine mind is boundleſs. And foraſmuch as God's love of that which is good, his adherence to it (if I may ſo expreſs myſelf) and delight in it, muſt correſpond to the knowledge he has of it, and the active force of his moſt bleſſed nature; no bounds can be ſet to this *love*, this *adherence*, this *delight*; nor can

can the *will* of God be otherwiſe than right in all its determinations. In this ſenſe principally the *ſcripture* is to be underſtood, when it affirms *there is none holy as the Lord, none good but one, that is God.* As all other Beings are holy and good only by derivation from God, not originally and independently as he is, ſo they come infinitely ſhort of him in theſe perfections, and therefore are not, by the perfection of their natures, abſolutely immutable like him. If we conſider only the *negative* part of holineſs, conſiſting in an actual freedom from all *moral evil*, or the mere abſtract rectitude of the *will*, there is a kind of equality between one innocent creature and another, of a ſuperior order, and between the innocent creature and the Creator. But when we ſpeak of *poſitive* holineſs, or the *force* with which the *will* is carried to that which is good, and the *approbation* of, and *delight* the mind hath in it, the equality vaniſhes; this, where other things are equal, being always in proportion to the *wiſdom* and *active force* of each nature. Take ſeveral bodies of unequal quantities of matter, tho' all gravitate the ſame way, yet their gravities are as their quantities of matter, which is the reaſon that a force ſufficient to ſtop one, will not hinder the deſcent of another. We may uſe this inſtead of a better illuſtration of the diſproportion in point of *moral excellence*, between an angelical and human mind, and between

between the ſupreme Being and the higheſt angel. The underſtanding of an angel will be owned to be much larger than the underſtanding of a man, and the determination for the *will* to virtue in a good angel, to be as much ſtronger and more unconquerable than in an innocent man, as his underſtanding is more capacious, and the activity of his nature greater. But what is the higheſt angel in this regard to the moſt high God? The *moral* impoſſibility that God ſhould be unjuſt, unmerciful, unfaithful, in a ſingle inſtance, is as much greater than the ſecurity which any of his creatures have in themſelves, againſt their being ſo, as the compaſs of his underſtanding, and the energy of his ever bleſſed nature exceed theirs. The temptation had need to be infinitely ſtrong, to be a ballance to infinite perfection; and more than infinite (which is a contradiction) to prevail over it; whereas, ſuch is the rectitude of the divine nature, and ſuch the extent of the divine power, that *God cannot be tempted with evil* in the leaſt conceivable degree; ſo far is he from being liable to be tempted to ſuch a degree, as would endanger his acting contrary to the dictates of his all-perfect mind.—'Till I viewed things in this light, I muſt confeſs myſelf to have aſcribed *infinity* to the *moral attributes* of God from a ſort of implicit faith, or in compliance with the language eſtabliſhed, without having any proper diſtinct idea of what I ſaid.

SECT.

SECT. XIV. From hence, by the way, I would obſerve, that *Cartes*'s account of the *human will* is not intirely juſt. " It deſerves, " ſaith he *, to be remarked, that as to other " things I find not any power or quality in " myſelf, which I poſſeſs to ſuch a degree of " perfection, that I cannot conceive how the " ſame can be greater and more perfect; *e. g.* " if I conſider the faculty of *intelligence*, I " am preſently ſenſible of its being exceed- " ingly ſhort and confined, as it is in me; " and at the ſame time I form the idea of " another underſtanding much greater, yea, " the greateſt that can be, and even *infinite*; " and for this very reaſon that I am able to " form an idea of it, I conclude it to belong " to the nature of God; and ſo of other fa- " culties. The *will* is the only power which " I experience to be of ſuch extent in myſelf, " that I cannot have a conception of any " greater; inſomuch that it is in reſpect of " this, more eſpecially, that I bear a ſort of " image and likeneſs of God; for though the " *will* be without all compariſon greater in " God than in me, both with regard to the " *knowledge* and *power* that are joined with " it, and render it more firm and efficacious, " and the *object*, as it extends itſelf to more " things; yet, preciſely conſidered, it doth " not ſeem greater, becauſe it conſiſts in no- " thing

* Meditat. 4.

" thing elſe but this, that we can either do " or not do a thing *(i. e.* either affirm or deny, " purſue or avoid it) or, rather, only in this, " that we are carried to affirm or deny, to " purſue or avoid what is propoſed by the " underſtanding in ſuch a manner, that we " perceive ourſelves to be determined to it by " no external force." But muſt not the *intrinſic original force* of the *will*, bear a conſtant proportion to the perfections of the Being in other reſpects? Is a Being infinite in *preſence*, in *power*, in *underſtanding?* And muſt not the *quantity* of *will* (I beg leave to uſe the expreſſion for want of a better) be anſwerable; ſo as that we may be allowed to ſay, *there is more will in God, as well as more underſtanding, more power, more preſence?* That we are not able to form a clear diſtinct idea of the internal force and extent of the *will*, is not to be wondered at, ſince we are as little able to conceive what the *power of willing* itſelf is, abſolutely conſidered—As for what he brings in proof of his notion, *viz.* " that " in willing we perceive ourſelves to be de- " termined by no external force," I cannot, for my own part, diſcern any thing like an argument in it; for beſides that the *will*, though ſelf-determined, is not determined with that internal ſpring and vigour in me as in the Deity, and therefore cannot be reckoned equal in two agents ſo infinitely unlike; there is another thing to be obſerved, and that is the

fallacy

fallacy in the expreſſion of *not being determined by an external force.* The *will* cannot be determined by an external force, much leſs can we perceive it to be ſo determined, in this ſenſe that we are compelled to *will* a thing againſt our *will*; yet in this other ſenſe of the words the *will* may be determined by an external force, that by a *ſuperior influence* we may be ſo irreſiſtibly carried to *will* a thing, as not to be able to *will* the contrary, while we are under that influence. Which very thing ſhews that there is no proportion between the *will*, any more than between the *underſtanding* of God and the creature.

Fourth COROLLARY.

SECT. I. THE *bleſſedneſs of the Deity is not at all leſſened by the miſconduct of his free creatures, and the ſeverity which this obliges him to make uſe of either by way of correction, or final puniſhment.* For, whence doth the bleſſedneſs of that adoreable Being, according to our conceptions of it, flow, but from the all-comprehending views of his mind, the perfect and unchangeable rectitude of his *will*, and his being poſſeſſed of power without bounds, and a nature not liable to change? Now neither of theſe can be affected by any thing without him. His *underſtanding* is a region of pure unmixed light, that can never be overcaſt with a cloud,

in

in which there is an endleſs variety of the moſt beautiful ſcenes. His *will* never deviates from the rule of right marked out by his *wiſdom*; nor can his *power* ever fail in the execution of what he *wills*; nor his *Being*, or any of his *perfections*, decay, or be other than they are. And, as he can never be diſappointed in reſpect of *himſelf*, by ignorance or impotence, by being not able to effect his deſigns, or not knowing the moſt proper manner in which to do it, ſo nor in reſpect of any of his *creatures*, by their refuſing to do what he would have them. For, if we take the matter right, the *will* of God directly regards his *own* actions, and only indirectly thoſe of his *creatures*. He directly and abſolutely *wills* the exiſtence of intelligent and free Beings; ſuch Beings therefore ſhall exiſt, nor can any thing hinder. He abſolutely *wills* to command theſe his intelligent creatures, either by the voice of Reaſon or Revelation, to do ſome things, and forbear others; and withal he *wills* to put it in their power, immediately or remotely, by the exerciſe of their natural faculties, or the aids of ſupernatural *Grace*, to act or forbear acting agreeably to his commands; this is abſolutely his *will*, and becauſe it is ſo, his creatures will be obliged to do, and able to do whatever God requires of them. So far the *will* of God is not liable to be defeated. For let men act never ſo wickedly, it will not ceaſe to be true, *that it was their*

their duty to have acted otherwise; and in like manner that it was *in their power*; which was all that God *willed*; he did not directly *will* their acting right, seeing then, they would certainly have so acted (the immediate object of such a *will* being something to be done by himself, *viz.* exerting such a powerful influence, as often as it was needful to secure the event, and would determine his creatures to act according to his pleasure) but he directly *willed* his laying them under an *obligation*, and giving them a *power* to act right.

SECT. II. But is not the happiness of created Beings contingent, depending upon the use they make of their *liberty?* Very true, it is so; because God *wills* it should. The *original capacities* of happiness are bestowed without any condition, but not *actual* happiness. The creatures may make themselves miserable, because the *will* of God is that, if they are happy, their happiness will be the result of their own choice. They are therefore made capable of avoiding misery, and obtaining happiness; and, for this very reason, that they are capable of obtaining happiness, and will not be persuaded to make use of the only proper means for that end, it is the *will* of their Creator that they should not injoy it. Wherefore, since God always *wills* what is right, and his *will* is never without effect, what possible room is there for

uneaſineſs and *diſappointment?* Having done all that it became him, both as a *wiſe* and *good* Being, to do, he can have no pain from the knowledge of his own conduct, but, on the contrary, muſt have the higheſt ſatiſfaction; nor can he receive any pain, by way of *involuntary ſenſation*, from the deſerved and neceſſary puniſhment of any of his creatures, becauſe he hath no *mechanical affection*, by croſſing which ſuch *ſenſations* muſt ariſe. Indeed, were God inclined to make his creatures happy, antecedently to the conſideration of their *moral* character and qualifications, it would be difficult, perhaps impoſſible, to explain how any of his creatures could ſuffer, and he not ſuffer with them (that expreſſion of *ſcripture* not ſeeming to have any thing figurative in it, upon this ſuppoſition, *in all their affliction he was afflicted)* the conſequence of which would have been, that *for his own ſake*, he would have made none of his creatures *liable to ſin and miſery.*

Fifth COROLLARY.

SECT. I. *THIS will help to ſolve that difficult problem concerning the origin of evil.*—"If all things as they came "out of the Creator's hand were *very good*, "by what way had *evil* its entrance into the "world? It could not be without a cauſe. "Was that cauſe *good* or *evil?* If *good*, "how could it produce *evil?* Might not

"*darkneſs*

" *darkneſs* ſpring from *light* as ſoon as *evil*
" out of *good?* If the cauſe was *evil*, then
" there was ſomething that was *originally*
" *evil*, and ſo *evil* had no beginning."

SECT. II. The anſwer lies plain—That God made every thing *good*, but, for wiſe reaſons, not *immutably* ſo. He ſaw fit to make his reaſonable creatures *free*, and to ſuſpend both their *future higheſt* happineſs, and the continuance of the *preſent*, upon the right uſe of their *freedom*. This *freedom* they abuſe, this abuſe is a *moral* evil, and productive of pain, both of body and mind, which is *natural* evil. That there would not have been pain and uneaſineſs of ſome ſorts, and in a leſſer degree, while the ſtate of trial laſted, though there had been no *ſin*, I ſhall not pretend to affirm. But then, if there had, yet as this pain and uneaſineſs would have been only an appendage to a ſtate of trial, and no more than that ſtate, tho' a ſtate of innocence, required, and therefore we may be confident not incompatible with a very happy life; the condition of *innocent creatures* on their trial, with all its diſadvantages and imperfections, would have born little or no reſemblance to the preſent ſcene of things, in which the evils of life are ſo numerous and weighty, as in many caſes to render it diſputable which deſerves the preference, ſuch a ſtate of exiſtence (were there no better in proſpect)

or not to be at all. Surely, the *primæval ſtate* of man muſt have been as different from this, as the world, after God had finiſhed his ſix days works, was from the *Chaos*. The preſent ſtate of things could only be introduced by ſome voluntary defection of man from his Creator and Lord, agreeably to the account of things in the *ſacred records*. And if *moral* evil muſt have been prior to thoſe *natural* evils which are the portion of the preſent life, much more muſt it be ſo to all that evil which is *final*, and ſeparate from any good ſufficient to compenſate for it. *Natural* evil, at preſent, is corrective of *moral*, or a *preſervative* from it, and, by exerciſing and improving the virtuous diſpoſitions of the mind, may be the occaſion of greater *natural* good in the iſſue. In this ſenſe *Plato*'s * reaſoning is very juſt — "That if men ſuffer, it muſt not be ſaid "that they are miſerable, and that God "makes them ſo, but rather, that ſinful men, "being miſerable, need correction, and when "corrected are herein favoured and aſſiſted "by the Deity." But the caſe is ſo very much altered, when no good remaining to counterbalance the evil, exiſtence itſelf becomes a burthen and a torment, or at beſt ceaſes to be worth any thing, that there is no poſſible way, that I can ſee, to reconcile God's putting a reaſonable Being into ſuch a ſtate of exiſtence, but ſuppoſing, that he hath deſerved

* De Rep. *lib.* 2.

deſerved it by the perverſe uſe of his *liberty*, or obſtinate refuſal to be made happy. And this, indeed, will effectually do it; the fitneſs being firſt proved or granted of God's creating *free agents*. Now one way of proving the fitneſs of this is from the exiſtence of *liberty*. —*God hath made free Beings, therefore it was fit ſuch Beings ſhould be made.* — And this ſhould ſatisfy all who believe that infinite *wiſdom* preſides over the univerſe, tho' they did not perceive what was the ground of this fitneſs, about which the advocates for fitneſs themſelves are not perfectly agreed.

SECT. III. " God (ſaith one) could not " approve his own work, without regarding " and conſulting the order of the univerſe; " and how could that order have been eſta- " bliſhed, or how the ſyſtem of creatures " have been completed, if no liberty had " been granted, no agents created? Had not " men and angels been *free*, they could have " been no more than *conſcious inſtruments*, and " *intelligent machines* *." But, with the leave of this excellent Author, and others that talk after the ſame manner, the true idea of *liberty* ought firſt to have been cleared and diſtinguiſhed before they had affirmed, *that without liberty men and angels would not have been agents, but only conſcious inſtruments, and intelligent machines.* This is very true, if by

* Divine Rectitude, *p.* 25.

liberty no more be meant than a *ſelf-determining power*, without which, it is plain, there can be no proper agency, and (were it no where to be found) no motion in the univerſe, but an eternal *quietiſm*. But that *liberty* which is given to rational creatures as the foundation of their *trial* means ſomething more than this. * It is *a power to determine wrong*, ſo circum-

* It muſt be carefully obſerved, that the *liberty* to be accounted for, is that power which the *event* too often proves rational Beings to have of making themſelves *guilty* and *miſerable*. So that the thing is not only *naturally* but *morally* poſſible, and may be ſuppoſed to happen without any manner of abſurdity. What is the ground of this *freedom*, particularly in mankind? Does it not proceed from the imperfection of Reaſon, the difficulties attending the ſteddy practice of virtue, and the inticements of objects and injoyments ſuited to the appetites and affections of human nature? Let us then only ſuppoſe ſuch a *uniformity* in the nature of man, that reaſon and inclination point the ſame way, ſuch a ſtrength and vigour that no inſtance of duty coſts him any labour or pain, and that moreover his knowledge hath all the clearneſs and extent of which it is capable; and, by this means, tho' we ſhall not deſtroy *moral agency*, we ſhall leave little or no room for *moral evil* to come into the world. *Why then is man formed and ſituated ſo very differently?* Here is the *difficulty*; which the reaſon for *liberty* taken from *agency* doth not at all touch. Since there might be *free agency* (and is ſo, as was ſhewn before in conſidering the freedom of the Deity) where there is no ſuch liberty as *this*, which, as it implies a *moral poſſibility*, and, in ſome caſes, even a *probability* of acting wrong, is, *comparatively* only, a *perfection*, but *abſolutely* conſidered, a *defect*: upon which account I muſt own the expreſſion of this *liberty being given* is hardly proper; that which is *given* being *directly a power to*

circumſtanced that the agent *eventually* may, and ſometimes does, *act wrong*. Now either there is no occaſion for ſuch a *liberty* as this, that a Being may paſs for a proper agent, or God himſelf is no more than an *intelligent machine*. The truth is, the only *liberty* required to the notion of *agency* is that of *ſelf-determination*; and ſuch a *liberty* there might have been in men and angels, without the leaſt hazard of their ever deviating from the rule of righteouſneſs.

SECT. IV. "But it is further argued, "that *liberty* is requiſite, as in reſpect of "order, ſo in reſpect of happineſs, to which "it not only conduces, but is eſſential, ſo "far that no happineſs can be perfect, or "raiſed to any conſiderable height, without "it *." Here again, the diſtinction of *liberty* juſt now mentioned is overlooked. Were there not a *ſelf-determining power*, the happineſs of the beſt and greateſt of all Beings, and ſo in proportion of his intelligent creatures, would not be ſo great as it is. But where there is this *ſelf-determining power*, what need of any further *liberty?* Is it neceſſary to the complete happineſs of any Being that he hath

to act right, attended with *a power to act wrong* from the imperfection of the agent, and the circumſtances of Being which he is placed in.

* Divine Rectitude, p. 26.

a *power*, or once had a *power*, of making himſelf miſerable; a *power*, properly ſo called, or that may, without the leaſt abſurdity and contradiction, be ſuppoſed reduced into act? From whence then is the perfect felicity of the ſupreme Being? Not but I believe, that men and angels, having ſucceſsfully paſt through a ſtate of trial, are the happier for having been once *free*; not *merely* from a conſciouſneſs of having approved themſelves in a ſtate of trial, when they might have done otherwiſe, but from the apprehenſion they have of an antecedent or original fitneſs, that they ſhould be placed in ſuch a ſtate. And here, as I take it, the whole weight of the argument reſts, which I ſhall indeavour very briefly to explain.

Sect. V. There is ſomething in the idea of a reaſonable creature that makes it immediately fit that he ſhould be *free*, to the end, his virtue and happineſs may be ſuited to his nature. The Being of a creature is *contingent*; for he might not have been; ſo, therefore, ought the *moral goodneſs* of the creature to be, that it may carry the marks of the Being it belongs to. The creature might not have exiſted, or tho' he exiſted, he might not have been in that ſtate of elevated and confirmed goodneſs, to which, *by patient continuance in well doing*, he is finally advanced. The creature is dependent upon his Maker; every

every thing he hath is borrowed; it is highly fit he ſhould acknowledge this debt, and that his acknowledgment ſhould be ſo intirely from himſelf, as not to be extorted by the conviction of his underſtanding, and the regularity of his will, in the abſence of all temptation to the contrary. The happineſs of all other intelligent Beings, beſides God himſelf, being the happineſs of *creatures*, there ſeems to be a double fitneſs, why it ſhould depend upon their own *free* choice, *viz.* that it may be *contingent* like the Beings who injoy it, and wrought out by thoſe reaſonable and active powers, which they have received from their Maker. The bleſſedneſs of the Deity being *neceſſary*, like his exiſtence and perfections, his *wiſdom* and *power* can be only imployed in promoting the happineſs of his creatures, not in contriving and executing means for the accompliſhment of his own. Whereas, the active powers of the reaſonable creature, as they may, ſo ought to be exerciſed in contributing both to the good of others, and to his own final felicity. Thus does it appear congruous, even to our imperfect views of things, that reaſonable creatures ſhould be made *free*, as no one will diſpute that being made *free*, it is fit they ſhould be treated and governed according to that character. And were it otherwiſe (that the fitneſs of God's making *free agents* could not be

be proved) yet the thing being fact, we have no reaſon to doubt of the fitneſs of it.

Sect. VI. This account of the origin of *evil* from the *freedom* of intelligent creatures is, I believe, the firſt that offers itſelf to every man's thoughts, who is not prepoſſeſſed when he is upon this inquiry. And I will venture to add, that it is the only true one. No hypotheſis, that hath yet been ſtarted, will ſerve the purpoſe. That of two independent and contrary principles dividing the world between them, one inclining and prompting us to virtuous deeds, the other ſolliciting us to vicious ones, one throwing ſweet, the other bitter, ingredients into the ſame cup, from whence comes the mixture of good and evil in every man's condition, one building, the other deſtroying, one doing, the other undoing; this notion, I ſay, hath been long ſince given up as indefenſible. The whole frame of nature, and the laws of motion by which it is governed, proclaim the *unity* of the *firſt cauſe*; I mean not here a *unity of Being*, in oppoſition to a *plurality* of Gods of the *ſame kind*, tho' this be a moſt evident truth, but a *unity of Perfection* in oppoſition to two or more Gods of *different moral characters*. Such a vaſt and complicated machine as this of the world is, in which amidſt the greateſt variety there reigns a moſt admirable *unity*,

unity, could not be contrived by any *wiſdom* leſs than infinite; nor actually framed and put in motion, ſo as to go on from age to age, and anſwer a thouſand moſt valuable ends and uſes, but by infinite *power*. The *wiſdom* that is diſplayed in this great work could belong to none but a *good principle*, ſince a perfectly wiſe Being can never judge any thing to be *good* that is *evil*; or that *evil* can ever be a proper object of a free and deliberate choice, or *good* of averſion and refuſal; and, always making this judgment, muſt always be determined to that which is *good*. He knows his own happineſs to depend upon it, and therefore may as ſoon conſent to be leſs happy, or even to be miſerable, as be tempted with evil, or tempt any one to it. And if all the *wiſdom* belongs to the *good principle*, ſo doth all the *power*. *Power* without *wiſdom* can never be a match for *power* and *wiſdom* confederated. The creation therefore, is intirely the work of an infinitely *wiſe* and *good* Being.

SECT. VII. Shall we lay all the fault, as others have done, on the *ſtubborn nature*, and *malignant influence* of *matter*? They who believed *matter* to be co-eternal with *mind*, (as moſt, if not all, the Pagan Philoſophers did) might do this with a better colour, than thoſe who believe the *matter* as well as *form* of the world, to be the offspring of *creative power*. But in whatſoever way *matter* be imagined to have

have come by its exiſtence, it is plainly innocent of the things laid to its charge. *Matter* cannot operate but by *motion*; between which and an inclination or perception of the mind, whether virtuous or vicious, agreeable or painful, we can diſcern no natural connexion. Nor is *motion* the growth of *matter*; or at any time, as to the *vis motrix*, reſiding in it, but ſomething altogether foreign and external. And when all the *motions* of *matter* are derived from *immaterial principle*, can the happineſs or miſery, the good or bad diſpoſitions of immaterial Beings be neceſſarily tied to certain *motions?* Or cannot the *firſt mover* impreſs only ſuch *motions* on the ſeveral portions of *matter*, as will have a friendly influence on percipient Beings? Were the body the unavoidable ſource of evil, why do not all ſouls ſuffer alike by their union with *matter?* How comes one man to have a happier conſtitution than another? Might not that eaſe and health and vigour, that calm and chearful ſerenity of the ſpirits, that ſmooth and regular flow of the paſſions, which is injoyed by a few, have been the portion of all? If a terreſtrial body does not *neceſſarily* hinder *one* man's virtue or happineſs, neither can it hinder thoſe of *another*. It is not therefore a *neceſſary* conſequence of the nature of *matter*, that the ſoul ſhould be ſubject to irregular inclinations, to violent paſſions, and to painful and grievous ſenſations by its union with the body. All this

this is not to be aſcribed to *matter*, but to the *laws of union*, freely eſtabliſhed by the Creator. Nor, even now, that theſe laws are eſtabliſhed, is any one *neceſſarily* vicious or miſerable.

SECT. VIII. Dr. *More* * hath a notion that angels themſelves are cloathed with bodies of a more ſubtile kind. And his reaſon for it is, " that ſome of them became evil " by their own voluntary act. But now a " ſpirit purely and perfectly immaterial, " cannot, he thinks, be obnoxious to any " ſtain or lapſe; for, being of a nature ſo " ſimple, whence ſhould it be tempted to " deſert its ſtation ?" — Not to examine the ground of this conjecture, I ſhall, at preſent, only remark that tho' *matter* be by the *Dr.* ſuppoſed the *cauſa ſine qua non* of *evil*, yet not the proper *efficient*, much leſs *neceſſary*, cauſe of it. A ſpirit by its commerce with body, becomes *liable* to fall, and by that to ſuffer, but is under no *neceſſity* of falling, in which the *Dr*'s opinion differs widely from that which makes *matter* the immediate neceſſary original of all the that is *evil* in the world.

SECT. IX. What way then ſhall we try next in order to get out of this labyrinth? Can we find any other beſides that of *moral fitneſs?*

* Reſponſ. ad fragment. *Carteſii.*

fitneſs? Or God's having fixed upon the preſent ſcheme, becauſe his *wiſdom* approved and pronounced it beſt? This I ſhould think to be the right way. But all are not of this mind. Rather than admit of any original fitneſſes in things, by the idea of which God determined himſelf, there are thoſe who have recourſe to a *natural benevolence*, prompted by which the Deity exerts his almighty power in producing the greateſt ſum of happineſs that can poſſibly be. This greateſt happineſs of the whole ſyſtem of rational Beings taken together God *abſolutely wills*, not becauſe it is fit, but becauſe his *inclinations* oblige him to it; and accordingly, the ſum total of happineſs, let men and other free Beings act how they pleaſe, will, in the event, be the greateſt that infinite *power* and *wiſdom* could poſſibly produce; or (in the words of a late Author *) "the greateſt of which the univerſe of creatures which God hath made, is capable; "ſtill ſuppoſing that *their original capacities* "for happineſs were fixed by his *will* and "*pleaſure*." I ſhall not take advantage of this Author's manner of expreſſing himſelf, when he ſaith, *that the original capacities for happineſs were fixed by the will and pleaſure of God*, which, according to the propriety of language, ſhould ſignify that the *very ſame Beings* might have been created with greater or leſſer capacities than thoſe which God hath actually

* Divine Benevolence, *p.* 71.

actually assigned them; from which, if true, it follows, that they were capable of greater or lesser *capacities of happiness*, that is, were originally capable of greater or lesser *degrees of happiness*; a capacity to receive a greater capacity of happiness, being, in effect, the same as a capacity of greater happiness; and, consequently, God bestows upon no Being the utmost happiness of which he is capable. Leting this pass, I shall confine myself to the general notion, which, if some men are not mistaken, is such a glorious discovery as does at once dispel the darkness, wipe off every aspersion, and shew us the face of Providence in its full beauty. Let us see whether it does so or no.

SECT. X. I imagine that in the preceding Discourse I have overturned the very foundation of the theory, *viz.* the notion of *benevolent inclinations* in the Deity, of which his *wisdom* is not the exciting cause or reason, but merely the servant or minister to execute what they order. At present, without insisting upon that, I shall endeavour to demonstrate, that granting the existence of such a *natural benevolence*, it will by no means account for the origin of *evil*. For if all the works of Creation and Providence owe their birth to *mere benevolence*, without all regard to *moral fitness*, why is not every creature of God, that is capable of happiness, as happy as it is capable

ble of being made? Why is there any ſuch thing as *miſery* in the world? Particularly, in the world of mankind? The anſwer, I apprehend, muſt be, that *evil*, or rather *a liableneſs to evil*, is the unavoidable conſequence of ſomething which the greateſt happineſs of man, or the intire ſyſtem of rational Beings, made neceſſary. But I very much doubt this is not ſo eaſily proved as ſaid. Let them tell us what that is which, while man, or other Beings of a higher order than man, cannot be happy without it, is yet the unhappy occaſion of *miſery*.

SECT. XI. It cannot be any thing in the *frame* of the world without us, and the connexion between that and the portion of *matter* to which the ſoul is united, ſince theſe external things might be ſo ordered and directed by the continual agency of the ſupreme cauſe, as to produce nothing but good, and all the good they can poſſibly produce. I confeſs, ſuppoſing the world to be governed by thoſe few general laws that now obtain, and the courſe of nature always left to proceed according to theſe laws, it is hardly conceivable but ſome inconveniences muſt ariſe to particular members of the ſyſtem. But foraſmuch as the ſupreme agent is not determined by *fitneſs*, but *natural benevolence*, what ſhould hinder him, being *omnipotent* and *almighty*, from interpoſing to prevent any ill effects that might attend

attend the natural working of *ſecond cauſes?* Would it be inconſiſtent with the *wiſdom* of Providence, having ſettled general laws, to be perpetually breaking in upon them? It might be ſo, had the *wiſdom* of God any other aim beſides the happineſs of his creatures, as the only way of gratifying his *natural benevolence.* But *wiſdom* being wholly imployed about the means to this end (according to the ſcheme I am now conſidering) the *wiſdom* of God is then moſt of all diſplayed, when this end is moſt effectually anſwered, in whatever way it be, whether by more, or fewer, laws of nature, or by none at all that are ſo fixed as not to be ſet aſide every time the creature may ſuffer by them.

SECT. XII. We *chriſtians* believe (nor are we ſingular in our notion) that there will be a more advantageous ſtate of things than the preſent, in which the happineſs of intelligent Beings as far as it depends upon the *material world,* ſhall have nothing wanting to it, nothing to diſturb and interrupt it. Now what will *at any time hereafter* be, might be *immediately.* Why then is it not? Why is not every thing fitted to give pleaſure? And why are we not better formed to receive it? Why ſhould there be any thing injurious to health, or diſagreeable to any of the ſenſes? "It would by no means be a ſatisfactory "anſwer, that God may make Beings with

" different degrees of perfection. That it is " an imperfection in us men, that we want " a perfect knowledge of our own frame and " conſtitution, to ſupply which want of know- " ledge in us, God hath affixed the idea of " pain to our nature, which is deſigned to " give us warning of any thing that might " hurt us. Pain is a real evil, and yet if we " were not admoniſhed by it, we ſhould " never know when our frame was out of " order till it was too late *." Such an anſwer, from the perſons I am now debating with, would either prove *nothing* or *too much*; viz. *that in a ſtate of innocence we ſhould have been as liable to pains and diſorders of body as we are now*; *and that the juſt ſhall not be free from them after the reſurrection.* Should it be ſaid, that *then* we ſhall be otherwiſe framed, the queſtion returns, *why are we not ſo framed at firſt*, if mere goodneſs, or goodneſs as a natural, not a moral, attribute, as leading *wiſdom*, not led by it, is the ſpring of all divine actions? Muſt a more imperfect ſtate take place firſt, that we may know to value a ſtate of perfection? Is it neceſſary that we ſhould drink of the cup of adverſity, to ſet our taſte right for the joys of immortality? Will theſe be inſipid if not heightened by the remembrance of the other? If ſo, what can we think of thoſe Beings who know good, but never knew evil; there is at leaſt one ſuch

* Gordon at Boyle's Lect. Serm. 3.

ſuch Being, and why could not that one happy Being have made others like him in this reſpect?

SECT. XIII. But perhaps there is ſomething in the *frame* of man himſelf eſſential to the perfection of his Being, and yet the fountain of all the evils he complains of. Man is a *rational* and a *free* agent; from hence comes his diſtinguiſhing happineſs; and from hence likewiſe it proceeds that he is liable to miſery. His happineſs ariſes from the right uſe of his Reaſon and Liberty, his miſery from the abuſe of them. But is Reaſon the natural cauſe of miſery? The higheſt degree of Reaſon would then be conjoined with the greateſt degree of miſery; nor could a reaſonable Being, as ſuch, be happy. Or is Reaſon the foundation of miſery? Only by *accident*, or, as it happens to be *imperfect?* So it muſt be, or not at all. But why then had not God given us (if not larger faculties, which perhaps was impoſſible, other faculties ſuppoſing other Beings, yet) opportunities for improving the faculties we have to greater advantage? And why is not every man's ſhare of happineſs in proportion to his ſhare of Reaſon? Reaſon alone then cannot be the occaſion of miſery.

SECT. XIV. We muſt therefore have recourſe to *liberty*, in order to explain this

wonderful phænomenon. Now *liberty* implies a power to do evil as well as good; and he that doth evil freely (as *moral evil* muſt be done *freely*, if at all) can have no ground of complaint, when he reaps the fruit of his own doings. True, he that *does evil* cannot. But can there be any evil, *moral evil*, where there is no *moral fitneſs* in actions? No doing what ought not to be done? How can that be *evil* which is not *unfit*; and which the agent is not to be blamed for doing? Nay, how can there be *liberty*, where the *reaſonableneſs* of the thing neither is, nor ever can be, a motive to action, the only *exciting*, or moving reaſon being *inclination?*

Sect. XV. The oppoſers of *moral fitneſs*, muſt give me leave to implore their help in getting over ſome other difficulties; as, *Why liberty* (if it be poſſible upon their principles) *is beſtowed? Is it univerſal? Might there not be liberty, and yet all men be happy, though not in the ſame degree?* Let me, in the firſt place, beſeech them to inform me, *Why this fatal gift, called liberty, is conferred on man?* * Should they ſay, that it is an inſeparable companion of *finite intelligence*, I do not ſee how the conſequence can be avoided, that no created

* The objections in *Tully* againſt the goodneſs of the Gods in giving Reaſon to man, upon the notion of a God moved only by *natural affections* would be but too juſt, and, I think, unanſwerable. *De Nat. Deor.* l. 3. § 26, &c.

ted Being, much leſs man who injoys ſo ſmall a ſcantling of this intellectual light, can ever attain to a ſtate of happineſs which he is not liable to looſe; in expreſs contradiction to the *chriſtian revelation*, that *the righteous ſhall go into life eternal*; not to be doomed to *endleſs viciſſitudes*. I mention this for the ſake of thoſe who will allow the argument from *authority*, when it is that of *Jeſus Chriſt*. Nor does it appear, that there is any ſuch neceſſary connexion between the *liberty* (as it muſt here be underſtood of a power to do good or evil) and *imperfect intelligence*, or Reaſon. For how eaſy is it for the ſupreme intelligence, being preſent throughout his works, by occaſional illuminations and aſſiſtances, to ſupply the *defective intelligence* of any of his creatures, and to guide them, by an unerring hand, in the way of innocence and felicity, the moſt perfect innocence, the higheſt felicity. I believe, I may add, it is not the imperfection of Reaſon, ſeparately conſidered, that is the foundation of *liberty*, but the weakneſs of Reaſon compared with the ſtrength of inclination. The weakeſt degree of Reaſon may be ſufficient to ſecure the performance of that duty which it diſcovers, were there *no temptation* on the other ſide; nay, is not barely ſufficient for this end, but would certainly and infallibly attain it, it being morally impoſſible that a reaſonable Being ſhould counteract the loweſt degree of Reaſon, without

out any motive or inducement whatſoever. And why is there any temptation to evil? Why have we *inclinations* that are not directly ſubſervient to virtue? Why do not *inclination* and *reaſon* always go hand in hand, as we chriſtians believe they will in the bleſſed ſtate that follows *next?* Theſe queſtions are aſked of thoſe who reſolve the divine actions into *unguided benevolence*, not into *fitneſs*, as the original reaſon of them.

Sect. XVI. Will they ſay that *liberty* is given (not becauſe it cannot be with-held where Reaſon is firſt beſtowed, but) becauſe *liberty* is neceſſary to happineſs? It will then be aſked, whether *liberty* is a univerſal thing, ſo that in the whole ſyſtem of reaſonable agents there are none, who, that they may be compleatly happy, are not made free? And the happieſt of created Beings would not be ſo happy, were their happineſs the effect of neceſſity, and not of their own free choice? But why ſo, when the *bleſſed God* is neceſſarily and unchangeably bleſſed? They may reply, that the happineſs of God, and the happineſs of his creatures are of different kinds; that the happineſs of the one is therefore the higheſt poſſible, becauſe it is *neceſſary*, while that of the others is the higheſt they are capable of, becauſe it is *free*. Should a reaſon of this difference be demanded, I fancy the patrons of *blind benevolence* would be hard

put

put to it to find one. It can be no addition to my preſent happineſs to reflect, that I might not have been happy, unleſs it was *previouſly fit* that I ſhould be left to my own choice, whether I would be happy or not. *Fitneſs*, I own, is a reaſonable ground of pleaſure. It is a pleaſure to think that God has done what was fit in making me free, and that I, as was fit and becoming, have made a good uſe of my *liberty*. But, without this *antecedent fitneſs*, which is a thing theſe Gentlemen will laugh at, I ſee not why I ſhould be better pleaſed with the happineſs of my condition, for being the iſſue and reward of a courſe of virtue freely choſen and continued in by me. Is it any trouble to me, when arrived to my journey's end, that there was but *one road* to it which I could not poſſibly miſs? To be able to go aſtray is not a thing of itſelf deſireable; nor is the conſideration that we were once ſo, though now ſo no more, any way neceſſary to recommend our preſent felicity, if it was never ſuitable to our nature, as created, dependent Beings, and therefore fit, that we ſhould, for ſome time, be left in the hands of our own choice. This, I ſay, is not at all neceſſary to give an accent to our happineſs, provided we take our eſtimate of the happineſs we injoy, not from *fancy*, but from *reaſon*, as all the happy ſpirits of heaven will do. And therefore, I cannot but think the *Jew* was quite out in his reaſon-

ing, who told Mr. *Boyle* *, " that he thought " *men* owed more to God's goodneſs than the " very *angels* do. For, ſaid he, whereas God " without any good works of theirs, purely " out of his goodneſs, conferred on them " that bleſt condition they injoy; by giving " man *a free will*, by the good uſe of which " he may glorify his Maker, when by abuſing " it it is in his power to diſhonour him, he " allows man that higheſt ſatisfaction and " privilege of co-operating to his own feli- " city." Not to obſerve the great improbability of the *ſuppoſition*, that the *good angels* were confirmed in bliſs without any *trial* preceding (ſince the fall of the *evil angels* is a proof of their having been tried) the very *ſuppoſition* ſeems to imply, that *a ſtate of probation is not antecedently fit*, which takes away the foundation of that ſatisfaction, which the *Jew* fancied a man muſt have from co-operating to his own felicity. This by the way.

Sect. XVII. This hold failing, will it be ſaid, that all intelligent Beings are not created *free*, but only ſome of them, for the ſake of variety, which variety is for the ſake of *happineſs*, rendering the whole a more entertaining ſpectacle? More entertaining to whom? To them who, by the abuſe of their liberty, are capable of making themſelves unhappy? Or to thoſe, who have no freedom which

* Seraphick Love, *p.* 117.

which they can abuſe? The former will be apt to think, that any ſuch variety might very well be ſpared. Nor can the latter need it, unleſs that they may be able to triumph upon the compariſon. A worthy ſatisfaction truly; like that of a man who lolls at eaſe in his gilt chariot, and laughs to ſee the crowd trudging along by him on foot. It is the pleaſure of a *Domitian*, who loved to exhibit his *naval fights* in rainy weather, often ſhifting his cloke to keep himſelf dry, which he would not permit any one elſe to do; at the ſame time compelling them to ſtay out the ſhew *. All variety does not pleaſe the *ſenſe*, much leſs the *mind*, which had much rather have one *uniform proſpect*, than a proſpect diverſified by the abſence of ſomething, of much greater importance than a fanciful variety. All *happy minds* muſt needs be *benevolent*, and, becauſe they are ſo, muſt delight more to ſee the happineſs of their fellow-creatures fixed like their own, where there is no reaſon for the contrary, than to ſee any of them in danger of having their whole fortune ſhipwrecked. The Poet †, indeed, hath obſerved,

Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terra magnum alterius ſpectare laborem.

"It is ſweet to behold, from ſhore, the "weather-beaten veſſel toſt on a tempeſtuous "ſea, and ready to periſh in a ſtorm."

Non

* Vid. Sueton. † Lucret.

Non quia vexari quenquam eſt jucunda voluptas,
Sed quibus ipſe malis careas quia cernere ſuave eſt.

" Not, ſaith he, that we are pleaſed with " other people's calamities, but to be ſpecta- " tors of thoſe dangers which we ourſelves " are out of the reach of."

But even this indirect pleaſure proceeds from a reflection the mind makes, that their caſe might have been ours, or at leaſt that our condition is not abſolutely fenced againſt the ſtrokes of fortune. Nor would a generous ſoul be ever the leſs happy, if he had no ſuch examples of wretchedneſs before him; but more ſo, the pain he hath from a ſympathetick ſenſe of another's evils, being more than equal to the pleaſure of congratulating himſelf upon his own exemption from them. Hath God made ſome Beings mortal, that others may have a quicker ſenſe of their immortality? Or is the *contraſt*, between the imperfections of created Beings, and the abſolute perfection of the Creator, that which completes his ſatisfaction in the infinite fulneſs of his eſſence?

Sect. XVIII. Beſides the inſuperable difficulties which I find myſelf encountered with on the two former queſtions, *Why is liberty given? And is this gift univerſal?* There is this inquiry ſtill behind; *Might there not*

not be liberty, and yet all men be happy, though not in the ſame degree? They who have made the beſt uſe of their liberty, we will ſay, are happieſt; they who have made the worſt uſe, the leaſt happy. But why may not even theſe be tried again and again, till they have learned to be wiſer? Why muſt one trial decide their fate? Or if there muſt be but one trial, and that trial hath iſſued unhappily, what forbids their being put into a ſtate of inferior but certain *happineſs*, in which their faculties being reſtored to their ſoundneſs, and their broken fortunes repaired, they have all the other pleaſures of which they were originally made capable, beſides thoſe which flow from a conſciouſneſs of having acted well in a ſtate of trial; which, by the way, cannot be very conſiderable, if he that acts beſt does not what is *morally more fit* than he who acts worſt? What room can there be for a ſtate of *final puniſhment*, though only *negative*, or ſuch as conſiſts in the everlaſting abſence of any good of which they are capable? Why any puniſhment at all, when no paſt evil conduct of the ſufferer can render it *morally fit*, if there be no ſuch thing as *moral fitneſs?* As for its uſefulneſs to inſtruct and warn others, ſurely a Being of infinite knowledge might think of ſome other way as effectual to preſerve his creatures in their duty as this, without making one part of the creation happy at the expence of the other. Or ſuppoſing he could

not,

not, yet why muſt ſome be miſerable, that others may be more happy, without any reaſon for it in the thing itſelf?

Sect. XIX. Where *moral fitneſs* is out of the queſtion, a leſſer ſum of happineſs divided among a ſyſtem of percipient Beings, without a ſingle inſtance of vice and miſery, muſt carry it before a greater quantity of good, where evil is not excluded; even though, after the ſubſtraction of ſo much good as is equal to the evil, the good that remains ſhould exceed that in the other caſe. The firſt thing that *ſelf-love* prompts us to, is to flee from *pain*; the next to purſue *pleaſure*. And in the like way muſt *natural benevolence* work with regard to others. The firſt concern will be that there be no miſerable object to jar upon the heart-ſtrings; the next to procure all the happineſs that is in the power of the benevolent perſon to beſtow. Would it not be a greater ſatisfaction to one, whoſe kindneſs was nothing elſe but a *natural impulſe*, to make *ten* perſons moderately happy, than *nine* in a much higher degree, if that could not be done without leaving the *tenth* in the moſt deplorable circumſtances, without all help and hope? This reaſoning holds much ſtronger when applied to the Deity, conſidered as having a univerſe of *his own children* to take care of, and ſuppoſed to have no rule to proceed by, but *kind inclinations*, ſeparate from every other motive

motive to action. A Being wholly actuated by such *inclinations* would be more shocked and offended with the view of *one thousand* wretches, in his family, than pleased with the sight of *ten thousand* Beings that were happy, and hereupon would immediately thus decree — " Let not a groan or sigh be heard " through the whole creation; let pain and " fear be forever banished; not one eye drop " a tear, not one heart be oppressed with " anxiety and sorrow; let every class of Be- " ings, and every individual in each class, be " pleased, and of the many millions that peo- " ple my wide dominions, not one be found, " who does not bless the bounty of his Crea- " tor." Such would be the decree, if *inclination* held the throne, and *wisdom* and *power* only waited as ministring attributes to perform what that dictated. And, did the creation wear such an universal smile, there would be more ground to suspect, that *wisdom* and *power* were under the command of *inclination*, than there is at present, that such a dark cloud hangs upon the face of nature. To shut up this debate.

SECT. XX. Were it not antecedently fit, that a reasonable creature should have *good* and *evil*, *life* and *death* set before him, let him that can give me a satisfactory reason, why any creature should be exposed to the hazard of such a choice. Put the case that a great number

number might be made happy, by placing a ſingle Being, as ſoon as he exiſted, in a ſtate of *miſery*, would this juſtify ſuch treatment of an innocent Being? Surely no. Let me take leave to ſay, it is not a whit more juſtifiable to make any one miſerable, whatever be his character, for the advantage from hence accruing to others, if there was not an *original moral fitneſs* that a creature endowed with underſtanding and freedom of choice, ſhould act in one way rather than another. If there cannot be a *moral difference* in actions, there ought not to be a *natural* one; ſince, without a *moral difference*, no man, act how he will, can *properly* deſerve to be made miſerable. — The ſum is, ſuppoſing the *will* of God to be guided by *wiſdom*, and *wiſdom* to be meaſured by *fitneſs*, it may be ſhewn how *evil* came to have a beginning, otherwiſe not.

Sixth COROLLARY.

SECT. I. *THE love of God to his creatures is eaſily conceivable upon theſe principles.* I doubt the notion of it advanced by ſome ought to be rectified, as being neither worthy of God, nor adapted to afford any ſtable comfort and ſatisfaction to the creature. The *love* of God, if they ſay right, is his making choice of ſome to be the objects of his munificence, while others, and they the vaſtly greater number, are left deſti-

tute

tute of all power to emerge out of that miſerable condition into which they are fallen through no fault of their own. Is there not too much reaſon to ſay, that this notion of the *love* of God to man is utterly unworthy of him? What does the Deity diſcover by ſuch a *love* (if it muſt be called by that name) but *uncontrolable power*, an attribute in which the *beſt* of all Beings differs not from the *worſt*, but only with regard to the *degree* of it? Yes, it may be ſaid, he ſhews his *goodneſs* too to his *elect*. Tell me how, if in all that he does for them he hath no direct regard to their happineſs, but determines their happineſs rather than miſery, juſt to ſhew his *arbitrary* will and pleaſure, not from any pleaſure he hath in beneficent actions as ſuch? And that ſo it muſt be is plain, ſince, were it *goodneſs* that wrought ſo ſtrongly towards ſome, as to decree their ſalvation by an *irreſiſtible grace*, without reſpect to any meetneſs and concurrence of theirs, the ſame goodneſs, *to ſay the leaſt*, could not but make the attainment of happineſs, or, if not that, yet the avoiding of miſery, everlaſting miſery and damnation, *poſſible to all*, who can never deſerve that miſery which it was never poſſible for them to avoid.

SECT. II. And as this notion of divine *love* is unworthy of God, ſo it is big with terror and affrightment to the creature, unleſs a man

a man hath the good luck to be of a temper to believe every thing, *with reaſon or without it*, that he is willing to believe. For ſay that this *love* proceeds by a *decimation*, taking one out of ten, there will then be nine to one againſt every ſingle perſon, that he is not of the happy number. Nor, to ſpeak truth, can I perceive any great ground of rejoicing that the *favourites* themſelves have, provided they uſe their Reaſon, or have any ſpark of generoſity in them, for when they think of the principle on which they imagine the Deity to act, in ſelecting them from the common maſs of mankind, and uſing ſo much ſeverity towards others, how can they have any dependence on the favour of ſuch a Being? He that hath no other reaſon for all that he does but mere will and pleaſure, may alter his will without reaſon. What is there more diſhonourable to God in deceiving his creatures with fair promiſes, which he never intends to fulfil, than in putting them under an inevitable neceſſity of being for ever miſerable? This being ſuppoſed no diſparagement to the Deity, is there any thing elſe that can be ſo? Could a perſon who aimed to conform all his own actions to Reaſon, and eſteemed it the greateſt glory of a Being to do good to all according to his ability, have much ſatisfaction in the friendſhip of a prince, who, while he careſſed a few of his ſubjects,

jects, had formed a design of ruining all the rest, and making them feel the weight of his power, for no other reason, but that it so pleased him? To those whom such a Prince should call near him, and load with honours, one might apply the words of the *Roman Satyrist*.

In quorum facie miseræ, magnæque sedebat
Pallor amicitiæ.----------Juv. Sat. 4.

SECT. III. It must be confessed, the *love* of God to his creatures, as others describe it, in the manner of an *immediate emanation* from the very *essence* of the Deity, diffusing itself on all sides, is more agreeable to Reason than this, and infinitely more amiable. God absolutely *wills* the greatest happiness of the system he hath made. But though this must be owned to be an *amiable affection*, it hath not all the beauty of a *moral excellence*. A *wise love* is that alone which becomes the Deity. And there are *three periods* in which this *love* may be considered. *First*, as delighting to bestow, in various degrees, the capacities and opportunities of happiness upon a world of intelligent creatures; *then*, as having a peculiar complacency in those of his creatures who improve the capacities and opportunities they have received; and, *finally*, as delighting to crown persevering virtue with the highest actual felicity that his *wisdom*

judges fit and proper. This is ſuch an account of the *love* of God, as gives the greateſt encouragement to all ſincere and honeſt ſouls, and to none but ſuch. To know whether I am beloved of God I have nothing elſe to do but to inquire, whether I have a prevailing love to that which is good. *The righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs, his countenance beholds the upright.* The *love* of God terminates firſt on *things*, and then on *perſons*. He loves the *righteous*, becauſe he loveth *righteouſneſs*; ſo far is that notion from being true which repreſents God as firſt abſolutely determining to make a certain number of his creatures happy, and, after that, by an irreſiſtible operation of his *Grace*, making them holy, as the indiſpenſible means of their being happy; not to add, that it is pretty hard to conceive, what can be meant by holineſs, and by neceſſity of holineſs in the creature, when the holineſs of God, as by them delineated, is nothing elſe but ſovereign will and pleaſure.—*N. B.* Though *Reaſon* will diſcover, that in the ſame degree as any man loves that which is good, he himſelf is beloved by the beſt of all Beings, yet the only certainty of God's ſo loving creatures whoſe virtues are ſo imperfect, as to deſign them for complete and everlaſting felicity, is from *Revelation*.

Seventh

Seventh COROLLARY.

SECT. I. THE truth of the preſent ſcheme being ſuppoſed, *the fundamental duties of Religion*, (ſuch as theſe following, *obedience*, *reſignation*, *love*, *gratitude*, *imitation*, *prayer*, and *glorifying God) appear plain and obvious in the theory, and highly reaſonable in the practice.* Here is one ground of *obedience*; I do not ſay the *only* one, but ſuch a one, that, if there were no other, we ſhould yet be indiſpenſibly obliged to obey God; and now that there are other reaſons of obedience, this is a reaſon of that uſe and importance, that it ought not to be overlooked. For having the utmoſt aſſurance that God can never do nor command what is not fit, we from hence know the fitneſs of any thing commanded, that God hath commanded it; when, perhaps, it is not knowable in any other way, and being ſure that it is *fit*, upon ſome account or other, to be commanded, we cannot reaſonably refuſe to do it. If it be ſaid, that, in this caſe, we only conſider the command of God as the *medium* by which we diſcover the fitneſs of the action, not as the *formal reaſon* or *motive* by which we are influenced in performing it; and ſo, notwithſtanding we do what is commanded, yet not doing it becauſe commanded, we do it not in obedi-

ence to God. I anſwer, that this would be very true, if this were our only inducement to the action; but when there is another reaſonable inducement, it is impoſſible that he, who hath a due regard to the one, ſhould be regardleſs of the other. The inducement, I mean, is *authority* founded on the ſeveral *relations* of Creator, Preſerver and Redeemer, which God ſtands in to us, and the *benefits* communicated in conſequence of theſe *relations*; which *authority* no one can chooſe but reverence, who does an action, becauſe, from God's commanding it, he believes it to be fit; for as it is fit that he ſhould have an eye to the divine *authority*, ſo the conſideration of this fitneſs, will have its ſhare of influence, as well as of the fitneſs of the action to be commanded, which he infers from God's commanding it. Whoever habitually and prevailingly loves what is fit, as fit, for the ſame reaſon that he pays a conſtant regard to one ſort of fitneſs, will do the ſame to another, and to that moſt, which is moſt fit; as nothing can be more fit than that we ſhould do whatever God hath commanded, becauſe he hath commanded it, and not meerly becauſe, he having commanded it, we are ſatisfied of its being fit, that is, conducive to ſome valuable end: and, much leſs, meerly becauſe of the *promiſe* or *threatening* annexed to the command. If I have reſpect meerly to theſe, or ſo much more to theſe than to any other motive, that no other motive,

tive, without theſe, would be effectual, every body ſees that it is not the *authority* of God that ſways me, or not principally, but *hope*, or *fear* of being made happier or miſerable by his *power*; and ſo what I do, is not really out of obedience to God, and for conſcience ſake. So little reaſon have they to triumph in the piety of their ſentiments, who reſolve all obligations into the *will* of God, and, when they come to explain themſelves, give us to know they mean not the *will* of God, as ſignifying *what he would have us do*, but *what he intends to do by way of reward and puniſhment*; to which we may add, that there is no ſuch *immediate* connexion between a reſpect to *ſelf-intereſt*, and to the *authority of God*, in the performance of one and the ſame action, as there is between a reſpect to the *fitneſs* of an action to be commanded (however we come to be informed of that *fitneſs*) and a reſpect to the *authority* of God commanding that action; the latter of which is as apparently fit as any thing can be, and as likely to influence a perſon who hath made it a rule to himſelf always to follow that which is right. One thing that proves this connexion between a regard to *fitneſs*, and to the *authority* of God, is, that the *chief*, if not *only*, ground of the *fitneſs* of an action commanded may ſometimes be its being a fit, or proper trial of our obedience. After all it deſerves to be remarked, that of theſe

two ſorts of obedience, or rather *two* ways of conſidering the ſame obedience (*viz.* obedience from a ſenſe of God's *authority*, and obedience from a perſuaſion of the *fitneſs* of whatever God commands to be, for ſome good reaſon or other, done) the *latter* ſeems *directly* and *immediately* to do moſt honour to God, as it implies an apprehenſion of his always acting in the moſt perfect manner, the moſt honourable apprehenſion that a creature can have of his Creator; while the former conſidered as a practical acknowledgment of God's *authority*, or rightful power to command, immediately ſignifies the regard which the creature in obeying God, becauſe of his right to command, hath to what is *fit*, rather than his belief of God's regard to it in commanding it. And therefore whichſoever of theſe is ſuppoſed to be moſt *acceptable* to God, (which muſt depend upon the diſpoſition of the heart from whence they flow) the *former*, as I ſaid, arguing the higheſt eſteem and veneration of God himſelf, is plainly moſt honourable to him.

Sect. II. Let a man have this notion of *Divine Providence* as in every part and ſtep of it conducted by the higheſt Reaſon, and duely attend to it, and he can have no doubt concerning that reſignation which is his duty always to practiſe towards the great Governor of the world. What more juſt and

and reaſonable than that a *finite* and *fallible Underſtanding* ſhould ſubmit to an *Underſtanding* that *never errs*; and a *Will* liable to be miſled and over-ruled by *irregular inclinations*, to a *Will* that is always *holy*, and *juſt*, and *good*; and that *Paſſion* ſhould not be permitted to cavil at that which *Reaſon* cannot but approve? To ſit down eaſy and contented, becauſe we can get nothing by complaining, is not enough. Did chance and neceſſity, or humour, govern all, a wiſe man for the ſake of his own quiet, would not ſtruggle with his chain, but endeavour to make the beſt of a bad matter. This is not our caſe; the world is the care of an infinitely wiſe and good Being. Our part, therefore, is to behave as thoſe whoſe reſignation is voluntary and chearful, not forced; or, if forced, is the effect of no other compulſion, but that which proceeds from a full conviction of mind, that every thing is ordered for the beſt. This reſignation, *cæteris paribus*, will be moſt eaſy to that man who, as he *believes* ſo, frequently conſiders and reflects, that whatever is done was fitteſt to be done, and that the meaſure of this fitneſs is the tendency of God's providential diſpenſations to promote the final happineſs of all the ſincere lovers of truth and goodneſs.

SECT. III. Keeping the ſame rule in our hand, we ſhall be led directly into the true notion of the *love* of God; be able to prove the

obligation to it, and furniſhed with the moſt certain mark and token of it. Love to God may be conſidered as a love to the *character*, or to the *perſon*. The love of God in the former ſenſe, or as *characteriſtical*, is the delight we take in the thought of an all-perfect Being; in contemplating the idea of ſuch a Being, and believing that this idea is not a creature of the brain, but a copy taken from an original really exiſting, and poſſeſſed of greater perfection than the moſt exact copy can poſſibly expreſs. *Moral excellence* is that part of the idea, which is the principal attractive of love, that which is loved for its own ſake, and communicates a lovelineſs to the other perfections, giving them their beauty and luſtre. The contemplation of an *eternal*, *ſelf-exiſtent*, *all-knowing*, *all-powerful*, and *omnipreſent* Being, immediately excites admiration, with a ſentiment of the profoundeſt awe and reverence. But that this reverence, this awe, and admiration, may have pleaſure mingled with it, ſuch a pleaſure in the *theory* of theſe perfections, as makes us ſincerely exult and triumph in the abundant proofs we have of their *real exiſtence*, we muſt have reaſons to believe, that the moſt *abſolute perfection* in every other kind, is conjoined with the moſt *perfect rectitude of will*; for then our notion of an *eternal almighty*, *immenſe* and *omniſcient* Deity, is that of a Being in whom all theſe perfections have

have the utmoſt *value* and *excellence* they can derive from the trueſt and nobleſt *direction* of them. *Eternity* and *immenſity*, without *knowledge* and *power*, affect the mind no otherwiſe, than an infinite eternal *Chaos* might be ſuppoſed to do; together with ſome *knowledge* and *power* ſuperadded, without *moral perfections*, they cauſe much the ſame terror, as clouds big with thunders, and lightenings, and ſtorms, when it is not known where they will fall. But now, only add *moral rectitude*, and the whole ſcene is changed, and what before was wonderful only, or dreadful, becomes amiable; amiable in the ſublimeſt and moſt extenſive ſenſe, or ſo as to challenge a love attended with approbation and eſteem, and ſupported by it; which the moſt *diffuſive benevolence*, not founded in *fitneſs*, would not do. We ſhould approve ſuch a *benevolence*, with almighty power in its retinue, much after the ſame manner as we ſhould the beneficial operations of *nature*, were *nature* imagined to have had no other parent but *neceſſity*.

SECT. IV. The *perſonal* love of the Deity (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) is the pleaſure we have in believing, that the beſt and the moſt beneficent of all Beings is the happieſt; that his *beatitude* as much tranſcends that of all other Beings, as his *moral perfections* do theirs. There is no room for us

to

to wiſh God *happier* than he is, or to wiſh him the *continuance* of his happineſs, for his bleſſedneſs is infinite, unchangeable, and everlaſting. But the thought of ſuch a happy Being may give us pleaſure, we may rejoice with joy unſpeakble, in the eternal indiſſoluble union of *love* and *majeſty*, of *infinite holineſs* and *unbounded bleſſedneſs*. The *obligation* to love God (as the duty hath been now explained) or to rejoice in the fulneſs and perfection of his nature, and in the unrivalled greatneſs and permanent duration of his felicity, ariſes partly from the immediate perception of his lovelineſs, and partly from our having partook of the effects and emanations of his love. God hath made us capable of judging of *moral excellence*; we cannot exerciſe thoſe intellectual powers which God hath given us as we ought, but we muſt perceive that *every degree* of *moral excellence* is amiable, and conſequently the *higheſt degree* of it moſt amiable; that the fitteſt conjunction of happineſs is with holineſs, and of the moſt perfect happineſs with the moſt perfect holineſs; this we cannot but *immediately* perceive, if we make a right uſe of our faculties; and our obligation to this ſeems to me ſelf-evident. The obligation to love God ariſing from the *divine benefits* I ſhall conſider preſently.

SECT. V.

SECT. V. The moſt certain *criterion* or *mark* of our thus loving God, or delighting in the contemplation of a Being, who always does that which is right, and in the thought of his happineſs upon that account, is our approving and practiſing that which is right ourſelves, according to the meaſure of our capacities. This right temper and diſpoſition of mind in ourſelves, is the ground of our delight in the perfection and happineſs of the divine nature. For being reſtored to to this excellent temper, we are better able to judge of what is really excellent and good, and cannot but delight in it, and in that moſt which is moſt excellent, and therefore moſt of all in that God, whoſe excellencies are without compariſon ſuperior to all. Our hearts being rightly affected to that which is good, we participate with the ſupreme Being in his perfections and felicity. We injoy both at ſecond hand, and, without conſidering the benefits which we receive from him, or do further hope for, we are wonderfully refreſhed with the meditation of a ſelf-ſufficient, and all-ſufficient Being, who, having the fountain of being and happineſs in himſelf, can never ſtand in need of any other.—" *My goodneſs* " *cannot extend to thee, O Lord!* And I re- " joice to think thou art ſo great and happy, " that all the ſervices of men and angels

" can

" can add nothing to thy happineſs and " glory."—Is not this a much better account of love to God? Does it not give more ſatisfaction to the Reaſon of our minds, and more plainly ſhew the neceſſity of a holy life, if we would deſerve the name of *lovers of God*, than theirs who place the love of God in blind paſſions, and confuſed emotions and elevations of ſoul, as often as they *read*, or *hear*, or *think*, of *God*, and *Chriſt*, and ſuch like objects; ſuch emotions as the underſtanding or judgment have little or no part in, and who, as a diſtinguiſhing proof of their love, pleaſe themſelves beyond meaſure, with the frequency and length of their devotions, without attending to the habitual temper of their minds, or obſerving what fruits their Religion produces in the courſe of their lives and actions? This ſort of devotion borders ſo nearly upon the *myſtical*, and is ſo very like the enthuſiaſtical raptures of ſome famous Saints in the *Romiſh* Church, that one would almoſt ſuſpect it to have been originally borrowed from thence.

Sect. VI. The love of God (even that which I have named *perſonal*) may be diſtinguiſhed into *three* kinds, *pure*, *intereſted*, and *grateful*. *Pure love* is the delight we have in the perfection and happineſs of the Deity, from the ſelf-recommending nature of theſe objects. Happineſs ſo ſeated gives plea-

pleaſure to a mind, rightly diſpoſed, as naturally as light, the firſt of all created beauties, does to the eye. *Intereſted love* is the delight we take in the ſame things, from the expectation of ſome great advantage that we ſhall have by them. It is a pleaſing thought that the world is the workmanſhip of an all-perfect Being, and the continual object of his wiſe and watchful Providence; that this God will be our God, if we make choice of him as ſuch, our guide untill death, and after death, our exceeding great reward. The conſideration of this is a very reaſonable ground of pleaſure and ſatisfaction. Nor is this pleaſure, though it regards our own intereſt and happineſs, at all inconſiſtent with what merits to be called *love* to God, but is, indeed, neceſſarily implied in the *love* of indigent creatures; inſomuch that if we did not deſire the favour of God, and highly value the hopes of obtaining it; if we could be contented to give up all further pretenſions to the divine approbation, and to retire out of Being, without knowing and injoying more of God than we have already done, there could not be a ſurer ſign that we did not *love* God; ſince in the ſame proportion as we *love* any perſon, we prize his friendſhip, and ſtudy to recommend ourſelves to it. *Grateful love* is the delight we have in the ſame objects, from the goodneſs of God already manifeſted to us, and the obligations he

he hath laid upon us, by his *gifts*, or *promiſes*.

SECT. VII. *Gratitude* is nothing elſe but *love* awakened into act by particular favours and benefits. Theſe are proper incentives to *love*; and when they prove ſo, *love* loſes its own name, and aſſumes that of *gratitude*. Among the many reaſons we have to rejoice that God is the happieſt of all Beings, and the Head and Lord of the Univerſe, this is one, that he hath been ſo kind and gracious to us. And though the infinite diſparity of condition between God and the creature, muſt for ever put it out of our power to return the kindneſs (which is what *gratitude* never fails of doing where it can) yet nothing ſhall hinder us from acknowledging it in every proper way, and on every proper occaſion, particularly by religious and ſolemn *thankſgiving*. I am ſenſible that ſome allow of no other foundation for *gratitude* to the Deity but *natural benevolence*. "We "have hardly any notion (ſaith one *) of "a good and amiable action, but that it "proceeds from this principle, *viz.* a bene-"volence in God, correſponding to kind "inſtincts in us. If kindneſs, or a good "diſpoſition be not the ſpring, no matter "what the nature or conſequence of the "action be; however beneficial it may be "to

* Divine Benevolence, *p.* 27.

" to us, we like the Being that produced it " never the better, we do not think our- " ſelves obliged to gratitude, or imagine " him any way the more perfect, as to his " moral character, on the account of it." Moſt ſurprizing news! That I ſhould have no reaſon to be grateful to God, becauſe he had his reaſon for being kind to me, tho' that reaſon was not borrowed from any merit of mine. This will appear more ſtrange, when it is conſidered that the very reaſon of God's eſteeming what he does for his creatures to be *fit*, though not founded in their *merit*, is taken from their *happineſs*; to which for the *creature's ſake*, not *his own* (he having no proſpect of any acceſſion to his own riches by that means) God delights to contribute, in every way, and to the greateſt degree, that infinite wiſdom will permit. So far is God's being moved by the *fitneſs* of the thing from diminiſhing, and much more from annihilating, the merit of his goodneſs to us, that in reality we can hardly frame an idea of it upon any other foot. The Being that acts from pure *benevolence* of temper, does ſo far act like a neceſſary Being; his goodneſs ſheds abroad its influences after much the ſame manner as the ſun ſhines, and the water flows. It is true he *knows* what he does, and he *wills* the doing it, which the others do not. But he *wills* it, not as a *moral*, but a *natural*, agent. His *benevolence*, in a *phyſical*, not *moral*, way, deter-

determines his *will* to all thoſe actions, which to his *wiſdom* appear neceſſary for the bringing about the greateſt good, or happineſs of the rational ſyſtem; not that this greateſt happineſs is eſteemed by him *morally better*, or *fitter* to be choſen than their greateſt miſery, but only is what his *inclinations* (of which no account is to be given) lead him to promote.

SECT. VIII. The thinking part of mankind have always agreed to place the chief part of Religion in the *imitation* of the Deity. But we muſt firſt know what the duty is, denoted by this phraſe, *the imitation of God*, before we can judge of the reaſonableneſs of it, or pretend to practiſe it. The *imitation of God* hath reſpect to the *general principle of action*, or to *particular attributes*. This *principle*, in all the works of God, hath been ſhewn to be an inflexible regard to the reaſon and fitneſs of things. The univerſal frame and courſe of nature ſpeaks to the Reaſon of every man, that there is a *firſt cauſe* of infinite *power* and *wiſdom*; and having not the leaſt ground to ſurmiſe *a wrong inclination* in the Deity, by which he may be miſguided in his judgment or choice, we conclude without heſitation, that he always ſees what is beſt and moſt becoming him to do, and as he always ſees this, ſo is ever determined to do it. Would we then be *like God* in this reſpect,

we

we have but this one general rule to mind, that as God, without the leaſt variableneſs or ſhadow of turning, purſues that which his infinite wiſdom dictates to be beſt, ſo we, according to the meaſure of our abilities, diligently enquire after, and conſtantly prefer, throughout the whole courſe of our actions, that which appears beſt to that imperfect underſtanding, and in that dimmer light, which our Maker hath given us. The more enlarged and accurate our judging faculty, and the more ſagacious to diſcern between good and evil, the greater is the reſemblance it bears to the divine underſtanding. The more careful we are to preſerve the ſubordination of Paſſion to Reaſon, the nearer approaches do we make to the Deity, who hath no Paſſions at all to miſlead him. And *finally*, that which completes our *imitation* of the divine Being, as to the *general principle of our conduct*, is when, having fixed our aim right, *i. e.* our general purpoſe or intention to do nothing unreaſonable, nor to leave any thing undone that is reaſonable and fit, we keep as cloſe as we can to this our aim and purpoſe, not knowingly and wilfully declining from it. We follow the Deity in making *fitneſs* our rule, as he does, and alſo becauſe he does; without which it would not be *complete imitation*, ſince that word does not ſimply denote a reſemblance, but a *deſigned*, *ſtudied* reſemblance: or, at

leaſt, a reſemblance occaſioned by a familiar converſe with the object of it, and ſo likewiſe in the common meaſure of this *fitneſs*, we conform to the Deity. To him the meaſure of this *fitneſs* is his own perfect nature, the ſeveral natures of his creatures, and the relations he ſtands in to them. In like manner, the meaſure or rule of *fitneſs* to the creature is the nature he partakes of, and the relations ſubſiſting between him and his Maker, and between him and his fellow-creatures. Is it not undeniable that every one who makes this *fitneſs* the meaſure of his actions, *imitates the Deity*, endeavouring *to be holy as he is holy*, and *perfect*, *as he is perfect*; perfect in his little ſphere, as God is in his, which is boundleſs? I am willing to believe that in all this I talk very intelligibly. But whether they talk thus, or indeed can do it, who are in a quite different way of thinking, deſerves to be conſidered.

Sect. IX. In the *firſt place*, what can they mean by the *imitation of God* who believe God to have no other reaſon of his conduct towards his creatures, but *arbitrary Will and Pleaſure?* To *abſolute Will* in the Creator, there ſeems to be nothing to anſwer on the ſide of the creature, but *abſolute ſubmiſſion*. What room can there be for *imitation* unleſs men of the moſt obſtinate and imperious temper, whoſe *Will* is their law, are reckoned among the *imitators of God*; which I do

do not find they have yet been even by themſelves? They have more reverence for their Maker, than to pretend their having learnt this temper from him; though this temper, it is to be feared, makes them have the better liking to thoſe high and riged notions, which repreſent God much ſuch a one as themſelves. Should it be ſaid in favour of this ſcheme, that in never acting without a reaſon, we act according to our nature, as created, dependent Beings, and in acting according to our nature, we *imitate* God, who acts according to his, when he ſubſtitutes his *Will* in the room of all other reaſons; my anſwer would be, that I ſhould own this to be very much to the purpoſe, if our eſtimate of the nature of God was to be taken from the *abſoluteneſs* of his *Will*, and not from the *perfection* of it. The independence of God upon all other Beings expreſſes his greatneſs and perfection. Not ſo the imaginary independence of his *Will* on the reaſon and fitneſs of things: at leaſt, it does not ſeem ſo to me.

SECT. X. Let us now try whether thoſe in the *benevolent ſcheme* can come off any better. After what manner will they explain the *imitation of God*, ſo as to give a rational and conſiſtent account of it? The ſupreme Being, they may ſay, is an example of *benevolence* to all other intelligent Beings. True,

if his *benevolence* be any thing more than a *natural inclination.* But if this is the beſt can be ſaid of it, then, in giving the *ſum total* of the divine actions, we muſt put it down thus, *the Deity always and only follows inclination.* And may not the *ſenſual*, the *injurious*, the *revengeful* man plead that he follows his? Notwithſtanding which, no one will preſume to ſay that ſuch men are *followers of God.* But their *inclinations* are not like thoſe of the Deity. And can they help that, as far as they are *purely natural*, or even as acquired or ſtrengthened by cuſtom, if in every action of which this cuſtom is made up, they were prompted by ſome *inclination* or other, which they could not refuſe to obey? But they ought to have over-ruled *inclination* by the force and authority of *Reaſon.* I would gladly know how; ſuppoſing *inclination* in every the leaſt movement, be the only *exciting* reaſon to action. And if *Reaſon* could have done this, and had done it, *Reaſon* would then have been the *principle* of their conduct, and not *inclination*; and in following *Reaſon* they would have departed from the pattern ſet them by God, of all whoſe actions, the firſt and maſter-ſpring (if ſome men ſay right) is *inclination.* Yes; but his *inclination* is to do good; in doing good, therefore, we *imitate God*, tho' it be only in obedience to *Reaſon*, not in compliance with *inclination:* in the *effects* we do, not

not in the *original cauſe* or *principle*; this in us, being of a higher order than in the Deity, if while we are governed by *Reaſon*, he is wholly led by *inclination*. Which *ſingle reflection* ſhould, methinks, be enough to diſgrace this opinion.

SECT. XI. Proceed we next to conſider the *imitation of God*, as it reſpects *particular attributes*. God is *juſt*, and *true*, and *faithful*, and *good*, and in all theſe characters we are to ſet him before us as the great exemplar and original of moral perfection; keeping him continually in our eye, ſo as not only to be juſt and good upon other grounds and motives, but to ſtrive to be ſo with a view of bearing the image of God, and being followers of him as dear children. In this divine image the ruling feature is *univerſal benevolence*, the lineament that is moſt obvious and lovely, and in which the likeneſs chiefly conſiſts. The firſt view of the Deity is *univerſal good*, to the production of which, in a way agreeable to the nature of intelligent and free Beings, he imploys his infinite power. Our power is confined within narrow limits; but our *wills* and *affections* are more boundleſs. We can *wiſh* happineſs to every Being that is capable of it, *rejoice* in every inſtance of happineſs that comes to our knowledge; and, the leſs we are able to do for the benefit of mankind,

ſhould think ourſelves more obliged not to omit doing any part of that little. Here a thought comes in my way—What title the *ſelfiſh generation* can have to be called *imitators of God*; they who frankly declare that they have no affection but for themſelves, no concern for the intereſt of other men, further than their own is interwoven with it, ſo that in their moſt beneficent actions *ſelf-love* only verifies the old Proverb, that *the fartheſt way about is the neareſt way home*. If *nature* and *practice*, in this ſect of Philoſophers, be not better than *principle*, they will be hard put to it, to make out their *relation* to God from *likeneſs*. While God in creating and governing the world, hath no happineſs of his own in view, but only that of other Beings, chiefly of thoſe that are intelligent, they for their parts, though capable of propoſing, with their own, the happineſs of their fellow creatures, and of concuring to it, would never be at the expence of a *wiſh* for the happineſs of others, were it not as a means of their private good. In any other view, the happineſs of the *whole world*, of their *country*, of their *beſt friends* is nothing to them. Say, ye idolizers of *ſelf*, where in the mean while is your *imitation* of the true God?

SECT. XII. It may be of uſe to obſerve, that the *infinite diſtance* between God and his

his creatures is no bar at all to their *imitation* of him. And therefore, when *Puffendorf** says, "that he does not see how the "sovereign right which God exercises towards his creatures, can be the model of "that right which ought to take place between Beings naturally equal; or how a "law that imposes on men mutual obligations can pass for an image of the divine "authority, essentially independent of all "law and of all obligation." If hereby he would insinuate that there is, and can be, no proper similitude between *divine* justice, goodness, truth, and faithfulness, and *human*, I think the considerations that have been laid before the reader in the progress of this Discourse prove this to be a mistake. Nor does the inequality of the *Beings*, or of their *stations* in the universe, or the *reflection* added by *Puffendorf*'s Annotator, at all affect this question. Are not *superiours*, when they behave worthily in their stations, *examples* to their *inferiours*, teaching them, in like manner, to fulfil the duties of their's? And whatever difference there may be in the *instances* and *occasions* of exercising any virtue, where the *general foundation of action* is the same, the same virtue exemplified in any one case, is just ground of imitation in every other, how widely distant soever

* Of the Law of Nature and Nations, *B.* 2. *c.* 3. § 5. *Barbeyrac*'s translation.

it may be, as long as theſe diſſimilar caſes are objects of the ſame virtue. Mr. *Barbeyrac* may therefore, if he pleaſes, call it an *important* reflection, but to me it appears *trifling*, " that there are many acts of *hu-*
" *man juſtice* which cannot agree to God,
" becauſe of the excellence of his nature.
" Such are a great number of acts of *uni-*
" *verſal juſtice*, and thoſe of *particular juſ-*
" *tice*, which regulate contracts invented for
" a ſupply to the wants and neceſſities of
" life. Who would dare, for example, to
" reaſon thus, pay your debts becauſe God
" pays his; be grateful, becauſe God is to
" thoſe who have done him good; obey
" your ſovereign, becauſe God obeys his ſu-
" periors; honour your parents, becauſe
" God honours his. Are not theſe reaſon-
" ings manifeſtly abſurd?" They are ſo; and the more manifeſt the abſurdity of ſuch reaſonings, the more needleſs was the remark. But what then, becauſe in the *particular inſtances* there is no reſemblance, does it follow there is none in the *virtue* that governed the action? A ſteddy purpoſe to make the *reaſon* of things our rule, agreeably to the example of the Creator of all things, and fountain of all perfection, and on no account whatſoever, to break in upon *right* and *order*, will have that influence upon a man as to ingage him to pay his creditors what he owes them, if he is able; to be grateful

to

to his benefactors, obedient to his parents and civil governors, *&c.* And, in that virtue which discovers itself in an uninterrupted course of these and all other virtuous actions, he will *truly*, though *imperfectly*, imitate the great author of his existence.

SECT. XIII. As to Bishop *Cumberland*'s * observation, "that we must first know what "justice is, before we can distinctly know "that justice is to be ascribed to God, and "that his justice is to be kept in view by us "as our example; because, we cannot know "God by an immediate *intuition* of his per-"fections, but by the *effects* first known from "sense and experience;" I grant the truth of it so far as this, that we must have some knowledge of *effects* before we can have any knowledge of a *first cause*; but that our whole knowledge of the perfections of the *first cause* is immediately deduced from *effects* I deny, having, I think, proved the contrary in this *Essay*; viz. that being informed, from a survey of the works of nature, of the *power* and *wisdom* of their author, we are able from his *wisdom*, to demonstrate his *moral perfections*, from which we are supplied with an additional proof of *the law of nature*, and the most perfect pattern for our *imitation*.

SECT.

* Proleg. to his Discourse of the Law of Nature, § 6.

SECT. XIV. A *learned Divine* † is pleaſed to expreſs himſelf on this ſubject in the following manner. " There is ſomething " previous to imitating of God, and more " acceptable to him, which is obeying him. " Otherwiſe, the duties of the firſt table " would be ſet behind the ſecond. We " may endeavour faintly to imitate God in " our benevolence towards men; but the " love of God, and all the duties which a " creature owes immediately to his Creator, " are the prior duties, and they are more " ſtrictly and properly the buſineſs of every " creature, than imitating God. To imi- " tate his example, is paying him a dutiful " reſpect; but ſubmitting to his authority in " all things, is moſt highly honouring him, " and ſhews the profoundeſt reverence, re- " ſignation and humility." My general remark here is, that the *compariſon is not juſtly ſtated*; which, when fairly made, is not between *benevolence to man* (which is but one *particular inſtance* of imitation, and a duty of the *ſecond table*) and *obedience to God in general*, but between a proper thorough imitation of God, and a ſincere univerſal obedience. When the matter is thus propoſed, there are two or three things about which, I fancy, there will be no controverſy, *viz.* that *imitation* and *obedience*, are both alike neceſſary,

† Dr. *Waterland*'s Obligat. and Efficacy of the Chriſtian Sacraments, *p.* 42.

neceſſary, being indiſpenſibly required by the law of Reaſon, and inſeperable from the character of a good man; that one of theſe cannot exiſt without the other, imitation without obedience, or obedience without imitation, and that, in both theſe, we honour God and are accepted by him. Theſe things, I imagine, will not be diſputed. The queſtion, therefore, that remains muſt be, which of theſe is prior to the other, moſt acceptable to God, and does moſt highly honour him? I think imitation. Imitation is *prior* to obedience. My reaſon for aſſerting this is, that to obey God preſuppoſes our having made a right uſe of our intellectual powers and faculties, the reſult of which is a conviction that God hath given us a Law which we are bound to obey, and a reſolution to obey it. Now in this right uſe of our faculties, we evidently imitate the ſupreme of all Beings, who conſtantly exerts his moſt perfect knowledge and power after the moſt perfect manner.

SECT. XV. I hope too, one may venture to ſay, that imitation is more *acceptable* than obedience, if all that is acceptable in this *latter* be, when traced to its *original*, borrowed from the *former*; which is really the caſe. That which gives an act of obedience its whole worth and ſignificancy, is the temper and poſture of the mind in performing

forming it, a right affection towards truth and goodneſs. And what is there ſo like God, in the imitable part of his nature, as ſuch a temper of ſoul? And, for what this Author ſaith, that the love of God is a *prior* duty to imitation, if he means to all imitation of him, it is certainly falſe. The love of God which is characteriſtical (*i. e.* a love of goodneſs, eſpecially as exiſting after the moſt tranſcendent manner in God) being the nobleſt imitation of him, and that which either includes, or draws after it, every thing that comes under the name of imitation. If he means that it is *prior* to ſome *particular* and *outward* acts of imitation; though this be true, it makes nothing to his purpoſe, proving no more than this, that *one* imitation of God is *prior* to *another*; *inward* to *outward*, a ſimilitude of *ſpirit* to a ſimilitude of *conduct*. Nothing can be plainer than that love, as the principle of obedience, muſt be *prior* to that obedience which flows from it.

Sect. XVI. That imitation more *highly honours* God than obedience, is, if poſſible, ſtill more evident. For only conſider the direct and immediate language of one and of the other. Obedience directly and properly reſpects the *authority* and *power* of God; imitation his *wiſdom* and *goodneſs*. And which is moſt honourable to God, the acknow-

knowledgment of his having the *command* of all other Beings, or that he is *infinitely more excellent* than they? Would it not be much more for the honour of a prince to have it ſaid that his ſubjects, in every part of his dominions, made it their higheſt ambition to be and do like him, as far as the diſparity of circumſtances would admit, believing that in the ſame proportion as they advanced in the imitation of their ſovereign, they ſhould advance in perfection and happineſs, than that they obeyed him in an implicit reſignation, never preſuming to controul or diſpute any of his commands? The inſtruction to be drawn from hence is, that though every way of conſidering the Divine Being yields great advantage, which is a very good reaſon why we ſhould not forget him under any character and relation, as particularly that of our *rightful* and *almighty Sovereign*, yet our thoughts ſhould be moſt frequently converſant about the *moral attributes* of God, whether as the *rule* to which every part of his government of the world is conformed, or the *pattern* which we are to follow; and to come as near as we can, that we may have more of the light of it derived into our converſation to make it ſhine before men. By repeated contemplation we may grow more intimately acquainted with theſe perfections, be more ſenſible of their beauty, and feel their attractive influence; the conſequence

ſequence of which will be, that knowing God better, in thoſe things which are his very nature as a *moral agent*, we ſhall love and reſemble him more; upon the ſame account as we ſhall be transformed into his perfect image, when, in the ſublime language of *inſpiration*, we ſhall *ſee him as he is*, and *face* to *face*. The more we place our religion in the *love* and *imitation* of God, the leſs will the danger be of our omitting *the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy*, and *truth*, and ſhuffling into their room, a feigned ſanctity of behaviour, and punctuality in ſome outward forms of devotion, which will never atone for the want of *a good and honeſt heart*, and the ſubſtantial virtues of a chriſtian life.

SECT. XVII. *Prayer*, by this rule of *fitneſs*, may ſeem to be excluded from being a neceſſary part of Religion. "For he "that aſks is worthy to receive what he "aſks, or he is not worthy. If worthy, "he will receive it, though he doth not aſk; "if not worthy, though he aſk, he will "not receive *." The fallacy of which argument lies in *ſuppoſing* what ought to have been *proved*, that there is no *antecedent fitneſs* in Prayer. For if there are ſeveral conſiderations which ſhew it fit that creatures, circumſtanced as we are, ſhould pray to

* Maxim. Tyr. Diſſ. 30.

to God, then it cannot be *fit* that God ſhould make no difference between thoſe who wholly neglect Prayer, and thoſe that are conſtant and devout in the diſcharge of their duty; nor can the former be worthy of the favours of heaven in the ſame ſenſe that the latter are ſo, not being in a right diſpoſition to receive them. Prayer, regularly performed, and with attention of mind ſuppoſes and promotes the true knowledge of ourſelves, an habitual regard to the Preſence and Providence of God; a ſincere endeavour after thoſe things which we make the ſubject of our Prayer; of thoſe chiefly which in our Prayers we acknowledge to be of the *greateſt importance*; and, *finally*, a kind and friendly diſpoſition towards our fellow-creatures. The knowledge of ourſelves, among other things, includes the knowledge of our unworthineſs, and of our weakneſs, and indigence; of all which Prayer is a *plain acknowledgment*; the more neceſſary, becauſe without putting ourſelves in mind of theſe humbling truths, we might be apt in the pride of our hearts to forget them; and, for want of reflecting upon them, to behave unſuitably to our real character of infirm, neceſſitous, and ſinful creatures, who have nothing they can challenge in the way of exchange from the hand of God, and neither injoy, not can do, any thing without him.

SECT.

Sect. XVIII. By the ſame means the mind is rendered more attentive to the Preſence of an inviſible God, and to his Providence, both univerſal and ſpecial, directing and ordering all things without us, and operating upon our minds. Who have the moſt ſtedfaſt belief of a ſuper-intending Providence, and reliance upon it, they who live without Prayer, or they who would as ſoon chooſe to be without their neceſſary food? Were the *petitionary* part of divine worſhip to be laid aſide, *thankſgiving* would not continue long after; for what more natural than not to reflect on our having received every thing from the bountiful hand of God when we aſk nothing of him; to be unaffected with the effuſions of God's paternal goodneſs on the creation, and look upon all that happens in the common train of events, with the ſame indifference as if the whole proceeded from an undeſigning cauſe? The unavoidable effect of all which will be, that we ſhall neither injoy the ſatisfaction in what we have that we ſhould otherwiſe do, nor trouble ourſelves about the uſe we make of it. Prayer is ſo far from ſuperſeding our own care and induſtry, as to be one of the moſt powerful arguments and incentives to them. For, I hope, we are none of us ſo unreaſonable, to pray that God would do *all* while we ſit ſtill and do *nothing*; that is, that

that he would do both his own part, and ours too, and put us in poſſeſſion of all the bleſſings we need, without our making uſe of the moſt likely means to obtain them.

The only conſtruction that a reaſonable Prayer will bear, is, *that God would ſucceed our beſt endeavours*; which ſhews that in every Prayer, there is a virtual promiſe of vigilance and activity on our part, according to the nature and importance of the things deſired. A man would be aſhamed to pray every day, deliberately and ſeriouſly, for his *daily bread*, who by idleneſs and extravagance took the certain way to make or keep himſelf poor; to pray that God would give him his *grace* to lead a virtuous and uſeful life, who would not be at the leaſt pains to practiſe any one virtue, to deny any one vicious inclination, or to obſerve any one rule, though never ſo neceſſary, for the eradicating of evil habits, or planting of good. And for the tendency which mens praying *with* and *for* one another, hath to beget and cheriſh *ſocial affections*, they need only conſult their own *Reaſon* and *Experience*. Does not joint and mutual interceſſion to the *Common Parent* of mankind, and in a peculiar ſenſe the *Father* of juſt and good men, diſpoſe, as well as teach them, to look upon one another as *brethren*, and at the ſame time widen both their views and their affections? How could any one, without be-

ing challenged for it by his own mind, recommend others to the favour and compaſſion of the Deity, and himſelf refuſe to give them any aſſiſtence, or perform the leaſt office of humanity for them, how much ſo ever needed? For ſhould all be thus backward to lend their helping hand (as all may with as much reaſon as any one perſon can) how ſhall they be ſuccoured, in many caſes, without a *miracle?* Which, according to the true intent of our Prayers one for another, we do not beg; the meaning of our Prayers for others being no more than this, " that God, in the ordinary courſe of " his Providence, would direct things in " their favour, and ſo influence the minds " of men, that as far as they can be mu- " tually helpful to one another, they may " be excited, each according to his ſeveral " ability, to contribute to the publick good." Theſe conſiderations, with others that might be mentioned, ſhewing the *fitneſs* of Prayer (at leaſt in the preſent ſtate of things) do at the ſame time prove the *neceſſity* of it, if we would pleaſe that ſovereign Being who does what is fit himſelf, and cannot but require it from his reaſonable creatures.

SECT. XIX. To demonſtrate the *fitneſs* of *glorifying God*, and apprehend the *deſign* of God in exacting this tribute from us, nothing more is neceſſary than to explain the

the terms. It is the glory of God that he *is*, and *hath*, and *does*, every thing that can enter into the notion of an infinitely *great*, and *perfect*, and *happy Being*, that he *gives all*, and *receives nothing*. His majesty is not like that of earthly princes, which, for the most part, arises from things *without them*, such as *sumptuous palaces*, a crowd of *courtiers*, *attendants*, and *guards*, a great deal of state and ceremony, and other like things, which make a *seeming distinction* between the prince and the subject, where, very often, there is not *the least real one*; and have their chief use from supplying the place of true grandeur and majesty. To *glorify God* is to think of him as he is, and to love him in proportion to our capacities, as he deserves. Of our going beyond the truth there is no danger, but only of our falling vastly short of it. Were there but one reasonable creature, this would be his duty and happiness, to turn his eyes towards this glorious sun, and gaze for ever on his beauty and brightness. This is the first part of the idea of *glorifying God*, or rather the first step to it. The next, and that which most properly and formally constitutes the duty, is when intelligent Beings take the most effectual course, to testify their own just sense of a Deity one to another, and to excite, and cherish, and improve, one in another, the same worthy apprehensions of God, and predominant af-

ſections towards him. He *glorifies God* moſt, whoſe words and actions are beſt calculated to propagate right and honourable notions of the Deity, and correſpondent diſpoſitions of mind towards him. From whence, by the way, let me obſerve, that an *active life* appears to be ordinarily preferable to a life of *lazy retirement*, and *barren contemplation*; and to be really *more perfect*. Confeſſion of the truth, and zeal to promote it, ſolemn and publick acts of worſhip, a reverent uſe of the name of God in our common diſcourſe, and (may I not ſay) above all the reſt, a regular, uſeful, and holy life, are all comprehended under the general expreſſion of *glorifying God*, being apparently neceſſary to maintain and ſpread the knowledge and love of God in this part of his reaſonable creation. Among theſe means, it is not without reaſon, that I have given the preheminence to a uſeful and good life. The greateſt perſon that ever lived upon earth has told us, *herein is God glorified that we bear much fruit*; *ſo* (ſaith he) *ſhall ye be my diſciples*. Glorious character of a diſciple of Chriſt, that he is one that abounds in the fruits of righteouſneſs and goodneſs! Can any thing be more for the glory of the Maſter, than to make this a mark of his diſciples, leaving them an example that they ſhould follow his ſteps? Or of the diſciple, than to follow, obey, and imitate ſuch a Maſter?

SECT.

SECT. XX. Whoever attends to what has been now ſaid to explain the duty of *glorifying God*, cannot miſtake the *deſign* of God in requiring it. It is a moſt certain truth *that God made all things*, even the whole frame of heaven and earth, *for his own glory*; that is, ſo as that they might be viſibly adapted to lead up the *intelligent obſerver* to the *firſt Cauſe*; to excite in the mind, the moſt elevated thoughts of God, and to impreſs thoſe ſentiments of awe, and reverence, and delight, which are ſuitable to his infinite perfections. He made intelligent Beings to glorify him in an *active manner*. Not that he *needed* or *propoſed* the glory reſulting from the works of creation, or from the praiſes and adorations of the intelligent part of it, *to compleat his own happineſs*. He was not moved by the deſire of fame as the children of men many times are, in their greateſt and moſt ſhining actions; who, without conſidering that in ſuch an action, they ſhall diſcharge their own duty, and be uſeful to mankind, and being urged by this reflection, think of nothing but the renown it will procure them, and how their names will be mentioned with honour, by thoſe that are ſtrangers to their perſons, and, as they flatter themſelves, by remote poſterity. Such a deſire of fame, *for its own ſake*, may be the *infirmity of great minds*,

but ſtill it is an *infirmity*, and therefore not conſiſtent with a perfect nature. Alas, what are the applauſes of a world, of ten thouſand worlds, to him whoſe greatneſs and glory is all inherent in himſelf, and independent of any other Being! What are their united praiſes to the ſingle approbation of his own eternal mind! He hath a more ſolid and divine ſatisfaction in himſelf than to be capable of delighting in a ſound or a ſhadow.

All that God does, and all that he would have his creatures do, is fit, and he does it, and would have them do it, becauſe it is fit; and foraſmuch as this is for the glory of God that he does that, and nothing elſe but that which is fit for a Being of infinite power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, to do, and becauſe it is highly fit that reaſonable creatures ſhould think, and ſpeak, and act in that manner which is moſt for the glory of God; in this ſenſe God may be ſaid to deſign his own glory, *materially conſidered*, or what declares and ſhews forth his *eſſential glory*, but not any glory *without himſelf* that terminates his view. It is very true, that a great deal of glory will redound from the works of God to their Creator; yea, and further, that he expects ſuch of his creatures, as can do it, ſhould ſerve and glorify him; but as for the glory that redounds from his works, it is a neceſſary appendage of

of their Being, much after the ſame manner as a noble production in any art is an honour to the artificer. *The work of the Lord is glorious*, and it is glorious becauſe expreſſive of the idea or platform of it in his own mind; and as thus agreeing with his deſign, he cannot but approve it, it is really lovely and beautiful. And if God challenges the ſervice and praiſes of his creatures, it is not that he reaps any advantage from them, or delights in them for their own ſake, but becauſe it is fit and reaſonable, and for the benefit and happineſs of the creature, that he ſhould ſerve and worſhip the Creator; and becauſe what is fit, and becoming, and productive of pleaſure and happineſs, God who is a lover of truth, and order, and of mankind, cannot but approve, and, as the wiſe Governor of the world, cammand under pain of his diſpleaſure.

Upon the whole; ſince we can have no reaſon to doubt of the truth of that notion which beſt conſults the honour of the divine perfections, beſt agrees with the univerſal ſenſe of mankind, and is beſt adapted to promote the cauſe of Virtue and Religion, and to anſwer the moſt difficult queſtions on the ſubject of Creation and Providence, I take leave to conclude, THAT WISDOM (and not *arbitrary Will* or *blind Inclination*) IS THE FIRST SPRING OF ACTION IN THE DEITY.

A ſhort and eaſy Rule of Conduct for Miniſters of the Goſpel, explained, applied to ſome particular caſes, and recommended in

A

CHARGE

Delivered at the

ORDINATION

Of the REVEREND

Mr. *Farnham Haskoll*

AT

TAUNTON,

Nov. 8. 1733.

A

Short and eaſy Rule of Conduct for Miniſters of the Goſpel, &c.

IT is of very great uſe, as in the general conduct of life, ſo likewiſe, in diſcharging the duties of any particular function or imployment, to have ſome *firſt Principle*, ſome one certain important and comprehenſive Rule, by carefully attending to which we may be able to judge more eaſily of the *courſe* we have to take, of the very *beſt manner* of doing things, and the *iſſue* we may reaſonably expect from the whole. I am ready to believe that I have thought of ſuch a Rule as this with regard to the *work of the Miniſtry*, to which you, *Sir*, have been now ſolemnly ſeparated; I make no doubt, with an upright and a ready mind on your part, and with the univerſal approbation of thoſe that know you, and have at heart the true intereſt of Chriſtianity.

tianity. The Rule I have an eye to is that contained in thoſe words of the Apoſtle *Paul* to *Timothy*, his dearly beloved Son, 2 *Tim.* ii. 15.

STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD.

The ſeveral branches of the *Miniſterial Office* have been ſo often, and ſo largely treated on, and you, *Sir*, are ſo well acquainted with them, that I need not ſay any thing upon this ſubject. And, indeed, had I a mind to do it, I ſhould find it hard to ſay any thing but what was common, and had been better ſaid before. But, as I am ſenſible you are not a little ſolicitous about the *method* in which you ſhall purſue the great end of all your labours (*viz.* the promoting of *truth*, and *peace*, and *holineſs*) ſo as moſt effectually to anſwer this moſt deſireable end, to have moſt preſent ſatisfaction, and moſt comfort and pleaſure in the review, at the finiſhing of your courſe: and as, upon this occaſion, you have been pleaſed to make choice of me to be your *Remembrancer* (for I pretend to no more) you will give me leave to offer to your conſideration a few thoughts and reflections (with which I pray God I may always have my own mind deeply impreſſed) on that excellent advice of the Apoſtle which hath

hath been now mentioned, STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD. " Be this " thy conſtant aim, thy moſt ambitious and " diligent endeavour, from which thou art " not to be diverted by any temptations " whatſoever. In every debate that may " ariſe within thyſelf, which thou ſhalt " chuſe among the ſeveral and contrary " ways that are taken by thoſe who pro- " feſs to intend the ſame thing, let both " thy firſt and laſt inquiry be, which will " appear beſt after I have laid aſide, as " much as poſſible, all human views and " paſſions, and have aſked counſel, not " only of my own calm and retired thoughts, " but of the Lord? Which will beſt ſtand " his awful trial, and may moſt juſtly " hope to have his final ſanction added to " it?"

In this *Exhortation*, it is by no means ſuppoſed a thing *unlawful* to deſire and endeavour our being approved, both of *God* and man, or a thing *impoſſible* in any degree to be attained. The Apoſtle *Paul* ſaith of himſelf, [a] *that to the Jews* (not yet converted to Chriſtianity) *he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; to them that were under the Law*, (obliged as they thought, by the Law of *Moſes*, though they had imbraced the Goſpel) *as under the Law, that he might gain them that were under the Law; to*

[a] 1 Cor. ix. 20,—22.

to them that were without Law, (the Gentiles) *as without Law, that he might gain them that were without Law*; *to the weak, as weak, that he might gain the weak*; in ſhort, *that he was made all things to all men, that be might by all means ſave ſome:* which however (notwithſtanding the indefiniteneſs of the expreſſion) muſt be reſtrained to things *lawful* and *expedient*, ſuch things as did not injure the *truth* of the Goſpel, for the ſake of which, he ſays he did all this, *ver.* 23. His deſign in yielding to *all* being this, that he might *ſave ſome*, *i. e.* ſave them from their errors and vices, which could never have been done, if he had complied with them, in profeſſing the ſame opinions, and doing the ſame actions.

The *truth* was what St. *Paul* would never give up, well knowing that if he ſo pleaſed men, he could not be [b] *the ſervant of Chriſt.* It is therefore only in *indifferent* matters, that we muſt imagine the Apoſtle to have uſed this complaiſance. What *Principles* were in common between him, and others, whom he endeavoured to bring to a more thorough knowledge of the truth, he took the advantage of, and, by approaching as near them as his *peculiar Principles* would permit, ſhewed it was not out of perſonal diſreſpect, or ill-will, that he differed from them. We ſhould willingly

[b] Gal. i. 10.

willingly offend *none*, and be glad to pleaſe *all*, could it be done by fair and honourable means. If they are to be reaſoned into an eſteem for Religion, and of us, as no ill advocates for it; if we can overcome them by dint of *good nature*, and by the force of *meekneſs*, *gentleneſs*, *condeſcention*, and a *readineſs* to do them all kinds of *good offices*, can oblige them to lay aſide their prejudices againſt us; if we can compel *all* to come in, by ſuch methods, we are very happy. But this, I doubt, is a thing rather to be deſired than hoped. Yet ſtill, it is encouragement enough, to do our utmoſt this way, and to perſevere in it, that we ſhall not wholly loſe our labour, that we ſhall at leaſt win thoſe who are more open to conviction, who for number, as well as weight, may be ſometimes worth regarding. For we ſhould have too bad an opinion of mankind, and be too much diſheartened in our endeavours to ſerve them, did we believe that truth, and ſincerity, and moderation, and benevolence had loſt all their influence upon any, or that they did not ſway conſiderably with ſome.

We read concerning our divine Maſter in his early years, that [c] *he increaſed in wiſdom, and in favour with God and man*; and the Apoſtle *Paul* hath told us how we may be acceptable to God, and approved of men, *viz.*

[c] Luke ii. 52.

viz. by remembering that [d] *the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*; that the *Goſpel* had ſet men free from thoſe reſtraints in things of their own nature indifferent, which the Law of *Moſes* laid them under, and yet that this freedom, as to the uſe of meats and drinks, was nothing in compariſon of the other privileges of the Goſpel; that univerſal righteouſneſs, and mutual peace, and charity, are ſome of the principal duties enjoined by the Chriſtian Law; and a holy ſpiritual joy, the preſent, as well as future reward annexed to it; by calling this to remembrance, and then *in theſe things ſerving Chriſt*, the intereſt and credit of whoſe Religion cannot be promoted in any other way, ſo effectually, as in this.

And if the Apoſtle *Paul* himſelf, and the other Apoſtles of our Lord, and firſt Preachers of Chriſtianity, were not approved of great numbers of men, what ſhall we ſay of the marvellous ſucceſs of the Goſpel, with the diſpenſation of which they were intruſted? They who embraced a Religion which could propoſe none of this world's encouragements to its followers, muſt do it upon the good opinion they had both of the Chriſtian Doctrine itſelf, and of the Perſons who taught it. And, perhaps,

[d] Rom. xiv. 17, 18.

haps, ſometimes the favourable notion which they had of the *Perſons*, from the ſimplicity and purity of their manners, and their kind, benevolent, patient, and forgiving temper, prepared a way for the eaſier reception of their *Doctrine*. But then it muſt be confeſt the greateſt numbers were ſtill on the other ſide; and in this ſenſe, the Chriſtians continued for a long time, [e] *a Sect every where ſpoken againſt*. And ſo it will be, in a greater or leſſer degree, with the cauſe and lovers of *truth* at all times, even where Chriſtianity is the eſtabliſhed Religion.

Conſiderate and impartial perſons, thoſe who think and judge for themſelves, who are above being led away by vulgar prejudices, and have a prevailing love for truth and goodneſs, to God and man; theſe will approve a man of upright heart, like themſelves, who is concerned for nothing more, than to find the *truth* himſelf, to aſſiſt others in diſcovering it, and to ingage both himſelf and them, to walk ſuitably to it. But can it be ſaid, that this is the character of *all mankind*, or of the *greater part* of them? I ſhould be glad to have more reaſon to believe ſo.

But though neither the *unlawfulneſs* of all deſire to pleaſe men, nor the *impoſſibility* of ſucceeding in this aim, in ſome degree, be

[e] Acts xxviii. 22.

here ſuppoſed, yet I much doubt whether it was not deſigned to be imitated, that all who are approved of men, are not ſo of God. It is no ſtrange thing, if this happens frequently to be the caſe, where any *love the praiſe of men, more than the praiſe of God.* For, provided they have but cunning enough to know how to manage matters, (and it is not a great deal that is required) they may eaſily captivate the minds of the ſimple, and by fair ſpeeches, and other arts, more *obvious* than they are *honourable*, become the idols of all thoſe, whoſe character it is, that they had rather have their *fancies* pleaſed, than their *judgments* informed; would rather be confirmed in their miſtakes, than convinced of them; and have always the beſt opinion of ſuch Preachers, as indulge them in the good opinion they have of themſelves: ſuch as inſtead of endeavouring to ſhew them the unreaſonableneſs of their prejudices, and paſſions, and perſonal and party quarrels, fall in with them, or ſecretly flatter them, as in the right; perhaps connive at their vices, and are more concerned to dazzle weak minds, with an oſtentatious and enthuſiaſtical piety, than to edify the world, with the ſolid, the rational, the uſeful, and divine virtues of a uniformly holy and good life. By ſuch methods as theſe, we may conceive the *Phariſees* to have gotten a much greater ſhare of reputation,

tation than they deſerved among the common people of the *Jews*, and the *Falſe Apoſtles* among the more ignorant, injudicious, and wavering part of the firſt Chriſtians.*

It is enough to cure a man, who hath generous ſentiments, of all fondneſs for ſuch kind of incenſe, to reflect from whom it comes, and by what low and *dirty ways*, generally ſpeaking, it muſt be obtained. Not that *perſons of integrity*, upon the whole, are out of all danger from the temptation, and are never at all warped, and influenced by it. Indeed, men of this character will not, in order to gain the favour of the multitude, *deliberately* do any thing which they know to be unlawful; but from *vanity*, or *avarice*, or *love of power*, or ſome other ill quality, which hath not loſt all hold in them, they may have their judgments of things, in ſome meaſure, inſenſibly perverted, and, by that means, be drawn to do things not approved of God, while they themſelves are ſo, for the general rectitude of their hearts and lives; or by an exceſs of good nature, or want of reſolution, they may go, or rather be carried, too far.

* Among the Corinthians, there ſeems to have been One, who headed a Faction againſt St. Paul, by whom the Inceſtuous Perſon was countenanced, if not openly defended.

A remarkable inſtance of which we have in no leſs a perſon than the Apoſtle *Peter*, who before that certain came from *James* did eat with the Gentiles, but, when they were come, withdrew, and ſeparated himſelf, fearing them that were of the circumciſion; the conſequence of which was, that the other Jews diſſembled with him, (*i. e.* diſguiſed their real ſentiments, in reſpect of the *liberty of the Goſpel*) inſomuch that *Barnabas* alſo was carried away with their diſſimulation. As what was done by St. *Peter*, and others in this caſe, proceeded from *weakneſs*, and was not apprehended to affect the *general cauſe of Chriſtianity*, it was a very pardonable fault, but ſtill it was a fault, which was the reaſon that the Apoſtle *Paul* [f] withſtood him to the face, as thinking him worthy of blame. He that is wiſe, will be made ſtill wiſer by ſuch examples, and particularly from this, will learn to take care, that his converſation and management in *religious differences*, as well as his *profeſſion of love*, be *without diſſimulation*,

You will not think it improper if I more particularly, but briefly, conſider the character of one *that ſtudies to ſhew himſelf approved unto God*; then illuſtrate this character by a few inſtances; and finally, mention

Gal. ii. 11

tion ſome things which conſpire to recommend it.

I. If we conſider the character of one *who ſtudies to ſhew himſelf approved unto God*; he that would be perfect makes it his firſt care, *to ſettle right and worthy notions of that Sovereign Being whoſe approbation he ſeeks.* We all think alike method abſolutely neceſſary, when we would cultivate the eſteem and friendſhip of our fellow-creatures; we ſtudy their *tempers*, their *notions*, and *manner of life*, and ſuit ourſelves to them as far as allowably we can, not giving them any unneceſſary diſturbance upon theſe heads, becauſe we know that the art of pleaſing is, in general, the ſame in all caſes, and with all perſons. This obſervation may be transfered to the preſent caſe, which is of the higheſt nature that can be ſuppoſed. To pleaſe God, there is an indiſpenſable neceſſity of our acquainting ourſelves with him, and in all things conforming to his commands, and to the ſtandard of perfection he hath ſet before us in his nature and works. This conformity is neceſſary, becauſe he is in one mind, and who can turn him? He is a law to himſelf, and this law is immutable; there being an eſſential and everlaſting difference in the nature of things, between the *moral Perfections* of the Deity, and their *contraries.* In following God

we follow wiſdom and goodneſs, and are therefore ſure never to go wrong, which is a very great ſatisfaction. Juſt apprehenſions of the divine nature and government are at the foundation of all true Religion; and a man might as well think of hitting a mark he does not ſee, as of pleaſing and imitating a God of whom he is groſly ignorant; for which reaſon no good man can be ſuppoſed to labour under ſuch an ignorance of the Deity.

There are additional conſiderations which demonſtrate the neceſſity of this knowledge, even of the higher degrees of it, in the *Miniſters of the Goſpel*, whoſe buſineſs is to guide others into the knowledge of God, and of the ſeveral important truths of Religion depending upon this *firſt Principle*, and derived from it. And, by the way, it is for want of laying this foundation well, that they who ſhould be inſtructors of the ignorant, inſtead of being ſo, are ſometimes the unhappy means of leading them into, or confirming them in, the moſt abſurd and dangerous notions of the Deity; notions, which though they may be *fundamental* to ſome particular *Syſtems of Divinity*, are, in their *natural conſequence*, ſubverſive of the true foundations of the *Chriſtian Faith*; and, while they ſet Chriſtianity in as bad a light, in ſome reſpects, as it could appear in if it was a falſe Religion, *unde-*

undeſignedly give the enemies of it a handle to treat it as ſuch. The beſt that can be ſaid for them is, that *ſo they have been taught*; and they ſeem to reaſon concerning what they have been taught in relation to the *true God*, as the *Heathens* did about ſome things reported to have been done by their *falſe God*. * *Sanctius ac reverentius viſum de actis Deorum credere quam ſcire.*

And becauſe it may be thought that there is no need of ſo much care and pains where perſons are, from their very childhood, inſtructed to ſay and believe, that *God is a Spirit, Infinite, Eternal, and Unchangeable in his Being, Wiſdom, Power, Holineſs, Juſtice, Goodneſs, and Truth*, I ſhall take the liberty to obſerve, that though this be a very good definition of the term *God*, yet this definition is no more than *nominal* (a bare account of the *name*) with regard to all thoſe who are not inſtructed in the meaning of it. For what ſignifies our aſcribing all poſſible perfection to God, if we have no idea at all of the perfections we aſcribe to him, or a confuſed, or miſtaken one, which, upon ſome accounts, is worſe than none? While we honour God by giving him the titles of *wiſe*, *holy*, *juſt*, *good* and *true*, we may diſhonour him by believing ſuch things of him as are utterly

* Tacit. de Mor. Garm.

inconſiſtent with theſe perfections, and would forfeit all pretence to them in a man like ourſelves. Now an indiſtinct and inconſiſtent belief, though it may not do all the hurt of one *totally erronious*, where there is a good and honeſt heart, yet, to ſay the leaſt, is not likely to prove ſuch a ſource of ſincere and rational *pleaſure* to the mind, nor ſuch a ſteady inflexible *rule* of conduct, as one that, being cleared of all diſagreeing mixtures, is thoroughout juſt and true.

Having ſettled ſuch notions of God as he can ſecurely build on, the next thing which the man who *ſtudies to ſhew himſelf approved unto God* is concerned for is, *to know the mind and will of God*; what God expects from him in his *perſonal* or *relative*, his *private* or *publick* capacity, as a *Chriſtian*, or a *Chriſtian Miniſter*. Without deſpiſing the light of Reaſon, he bleſſes God, from his heart, for a ſupernatural Revelation, and is of opinion that as Revelation is a vaſt improvement upon Reaſon, ſo Reaſon is of great uſe in proving, and eſtimating the value of Revelation, towards the right underſtanding of it, in pointing out and clearing the connexion of revealed Religion with natural, and the true grounds of both in the eternal and unchangeable difference of things. From the *Scripture* he draws the ſcheme of *Chriſtian Doctrine*, and the model of a *Chriſtian Life*, with all the

the exactneſs and fidelity he is capable of, and from thence traces out his duty as a Miniſter of the Goſpel.

But foraſmuch as the general duties of a *Chriſtian* and a *Miniſter* are as plain as they are important, and agreed on all hands, I content myſelf with juſt puting you in mind of them, becauſe you know them, and are eſtabliſhed in the things which become *ſound Doctrine.* What I have more particularly in my view here, is the care taken by the perſon I am ſpeaking of to know the will of God in *points of conduct*, about which the world is divided; and in *caſes* which, though they may be plain enough of themſelves, are yet rendered doubtful and perplexed by notions and cuſtoms that have gained authority by eſtabliſhment and length of time. And here he continually finds the advantage of thoſe clear and rational conceptions which he hath entertained, and well digeſted, concerning the nature of the works of God; which open and enlarge his mind, render it more quick and ſagacious in other queſtions that have any connexion with theſe, rectify and conduct the judging faculty, put the right clue into his hand, and ſet him above thoſe ſervile ſuperſtitious fears, thoſe weak and groundleſs jealouſies and ſcruples, and thoſe vulgar prejudices to which perſons who are afraid

afraid *to think freely* (in the beſt ſenſe of that word) are perpetually liable.

To theſe juſt *notions* of the Divine Being he forgets not to add humble and frequent *addreſſes* to him for direction, illumination and aſſiſtance, not at all doubting of the truth of that promiſe, that *the meek he will guide in judgment, the meek he will teach his way*; that God hath an immediate acceſs to the mind; and, where his influences are piouſly acknowledged and earneſtly beſought, does frequently give that light, and throw in thoſe hints, which free a man from the perplexity of thought he was before under, and make his way plain and eaſy before him.——Nor does he fooliſhly make his truſt in the *divine guidance* a pretence for neglecting the rules of common *Prudence*; but conſiders *Times* and *Seaſons*, *Perſons* and *Things*, and makes proper allowances for every circumſtance; in which he hath the authority of St. *Paul*'s example, who at one time circumciſed *Timothy* [g] *becauſe of the* (unconverted) *Jews that were in thoſe quarters, who all knew that his Father was a Greek:* at another time, would not ſuffer that [h] *Titus* who was a *Greek* ſhould be compelled to be circumciſed, and that becauſe of falſe brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to ſpy out the liberty which the profeſſors of the Goſpel

[g] Acts xvi. 3. [h] Gal. ii. 3—5.

pel had in Chriſt Jeſus, that they might bring them into bondage; for which reaſon the Apoſtle gave place to them by ſubjection, not ſo much as for an hour, that the truth of the Goſpel might continue with the Churches.

There was, indeed, this material difference in the two caſes, that *Timothy* was a *Jew* by the *Mother*'s ſide, *Titus* entirely a *Greek*, or *Gentile*. Yet ſtill, in repreſenting the Apoſtle's conduct on theſe two occaſions, the deſign ſeems to have been to intimate his being more yielding in one caſe than in the other, together with the reaſon of it. It is probable that, barely to gratify theſe *falſe brethren*, he would not have circumciſed *Timothy* any more than *Titus*, ſince he would not give place to them (or ſubmit to any of their demands) ſo much as for an hour: and, on the other hand, that, to avoid offending the *unbelieving Jews*, he would not have taken *Titus* with him as he did *Timothy*; the circumciſion of *Titus* being what he would not have conſented to upon any terms; without which, the *Jews* would have had an inſuperable prejudice againſt him, if he had choſen *Titus* for his Aſſiſtant, he would therefore have followed the middle way, and left him behind.

At firſt St. *Paul* did not communicate with any concerning the Goſpel which he preached

preached to the Gentiles; afterwards he did, as we learn from the beginning of the Chapter juſt quoted, where it is ſaid, that *fourteen years after* he *went up again to Jeruſalem——by revelation, and communicated to them the Goſpel which* he *preached to the Gentiles, but privately to them that were of reputation*, (that is, to the *Apoſtles*, to whom he *firſt* and more *particularly* imparted the affair) *leſt by any means* (ſaith he) *I ſhould run, or had run in vain*; *i. e.* leſt he ſhould be leſs ſucceſful in his future labours, or give his enemies an opportunity to deſtroy what he had already built, if it ſhould be believed that he taught the circumciſion of the *converted Gentiles*, or that he and his Goſpel were not owned and approved by the other *Apoſtles*, both which ſuggeſtions were at once confuted by the friendly reception he had from the *Apoſtles*, and their not compelling *Titus* to be circumciſed. The inſtruction from whence is, that *circumſtances* being different, a prudent man will not think that his *conduct* ought always to be exactly the ſame.

Finally; being ſatisfied, after mature examination, what is the will of God, in relation to any debated point, he is ſo intent upon approving himſelf to his great Lord and Maſter, that *he will follow that which appears to be his duty, whatever contradiction, reproach, or inconvenience, he may happen to ſuffer*

ſuffer by it. He is thus reſolved not only in the eſſential and uncontroverted duties of his Chriſtian and Miniſterial Profeſſion, giving all diligence to be regular and holy in his converſation, and faithful in the truſt committed to him, but further, in things too often overlooked by perſons, in the main, ſincere, through haſte, or prepoſſeſſion, or a ſecret biaſs to ſomething or other, that lies out of the ſtrait and narrow way: the queſtion with him who ſtrives to be *perfect* in all incidental matters, as well as others, not being-Will this ſuit with my worldly intereſt? Is it agreeable to my inclinations? Or can I hope by doing this to pleaſe men? No; but ſhall I be approved of God? In this alſo like St. *Paul*, who, when it pleaſed God to reveal his Son to him, that he ſhould preach him among the heathen, immediately ſet about the work he was called to, [i] *not conferring with fleſh and blood, i. e.* with any man whatſoever to know his opinion upon it: and who, by being leſs forward in aſſerting the liberty and privileges of the *Gentile Converts*, might have eaſily avoided a good part of the ſtorm that fell upon him, for ſo he aſks (in anſwer to ſome who ſuggeſted that he was guilty of *temporizing*, by ſeeming to allow the neceſſity of circumciſion, which was a favourite notion of the Jews) [k] *if I yet preach*

[i] Gal. i. 15, 16. [k] Gal. v. 11.

preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offence of the cross ceased. As much as if he had said, the persecutions which I undergo from the Jews, are a clear proof of the falsity of this charge of my preaching circumcision, since the great offence which they have taken up against the doctrine of a crucified Jesus, is the apprehension of its being intended to set aside the rites and customs of the Mosaic Law. Would I spare them in this one point, for all the rest, they would more easily forgive me.——Let this suffice for the character.

II. I shall now produce a few instances which serve to illustrate this character, and in which the man, who *studies to shew himself approved unto God*, in the manner before explained, makes it visible that he does so.

1. Is he persuaded of its being not only his undoubted right, but his plain duty, to search and judge for himself? In this case, that he may be approved of God, he lays aside all undue regard to human authority, to great names, and great bodies of men; and leaving the streams which, for ought he knows, may have been poisoned, or at best defiled and muddied, he goes immediately to the *fountain-head* of truth. And it would be

be exceeding ſtrange, if, being ſo impartial, and having ſuch juſt notions of God as I have ſuppoſed, he ſhould not diſcern this to be his duty; as it is to me amazing how any of tolerable ſenſe and honeſty can make it a *ſerious diſpute*, whether it be his right. It is, indeed, the right of every man to uſe the faculties which God hath given him, and, as far as he is capable, and has opportunity for it, to ſee with his own eyes, to ſearch the Scriptures, to try notions and ſpirits, and having proved all things, then to hold faſt that which is good, which ſometimes cannot be known to be good before trial. This is every man's birthright, as a man, and much more every Chriſtian's; and being their right, muſt in a greater or leſſer degree, according to the diverſity of their capacities and circumſtances, be their duty too.

But was the matter doubtful in reſpect of *Private Chriſtians* (which it is not) yet, as to *Miniſters*, the moſt palpable abſurdities, and ſome of the worſt of conſequences, muſt attend the denial of this liberty. Are they not the Miniſters of Chriſt? And is it not the Goſpel of Chriſt that they are to preach? Granted; may it be replied by ſome; but then they muſt not look into the bundle that is delivered them, but let things paſs juſt as they have received them, either from *the Church of Rome* (as they of that

that Church ſay) or from *Sets of Articles*, *Catechiſms*, and *Confeſſions*, as too many Proteſtants would ſay, did not their principles, as Proteſtants, make them aſhamed to ſpeak out. But I would be glad to know why we muſt not receive *the Doctrine of Chriſt* from *Chriſt himſelf*, ſince we may have it *immediately* from him? Or why it is thought a neceſſary qualification in a Miniſter of the Goſpel to underſtand (at leaſt) the *Original Language*, in which the writings of the *New Teſtament* were pened, if, in ſtudying theſe writings, he is tied up to one particular Syſtem of Notions, which he muſt make his rule of interpretation, under the ſpecious title of the *Analogy of Faith*, without regarding the deſign of the author, the coherence of the diſcourſe, or the force and propriety of words? *Study to ſhew thyſelf approved unto God*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, righly dividing the word of truth: i. e.* (as the *Context* makes probable) ſeparating among the things that are taught by men, things *important* from things *trivial*, *truth* from *error* and *fable*, that nothing but the pure uncorrupted word of God may remain.

One inference from hence (which lies too plain to be overlooked) is, that a man who ſets up for a teacher of others, and yet takes indifferently all doctrines that he hath been taught,

taught by the *Maſters of his Faith* (notto ſay of his *Conſcience)* without knowing how to part the good from the bad, or being any way concerned to do it, is a workman that hath too much cauſe to be aſhamed. A like direction is given by the ſame Apoſtle in his Epiſtle to *Titus*, where ſpeaking of a *Goſpel Biſhop*, he ſays, [1] *He muſt be one who holds faſt the faithful word, as he hath been taught,* πιστε λογε, *the word worthy of credit*, which may be known by this mark, that it is κατα την διδαχην, *according to the doctrine of Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles*, not of deſigning, or of weak and fallible men.

But may we venture to go off from the principles of ſuch and ſuch, whoſe praiſe is in the Churches for their exemplary piety, and ſtrictneſs of converſation? The anſwer is eaſy. If the *piety* was all, or almoſt all, on one ſide, there might be ſome temptation to ſuſpect the *truth* was ſo too, but, when in order to follow one ſet of good men in their opinions, we muſt abandon others of equal piety, and, as it may happen, ſuperior learning; or, if we will hold with all ſides, muſt believe contradictions, we muſt leave this rule to thoſe who have vanity enough to think that the power of Religion is confined to their own party.

[1] Tit. i. 9.

But ſhall private Miniſters preſume to remove thoſe boundaries and landmarks, which have been ſettled in Synods, and other venerable Aſſemblies? This queſtion may be anſwered by another. Did theſe Aſſemblies pretend *Authority to decree Articles of Faith*, or did they not? If they did, it will be time enough to ſubmit to their decrees, when they have ſatisfied the world, who gave them this authority. If they did not aſſume any ſuch authority, as they could not do it conſiſtently, without challenging infallibility too, why ſhould we be ſo forward to compliment them with that authority and infallibility, which they themſelves profeſſedly diſclaim? Or why appeal to their Decrees as the laſt reſort, when they themſelves ſend us for the poof of all they have decreed and taught to the *Holy Scriptures?* In vain are we referred to the *Scriptures*, if after all we muſt not *ſearch the Scriptures, to ſee whether theſe things are ſo*, but be obliged to receive the *Scripture* with their interpretation of it. A power in any men to *interpret Scripture*, without being liable to have their interpretations called in queſtion, is, in effect, the ſame as a power to add to it; for how ſhall it be known whether any thing be added or no, when barely their ſaying that this, or that, is only the true ſenſe of Scripture, (though to us it hath all the appearance of an addition) is a ſuf-

a ſufficient reaſon to believe, that it is no more?

It further deſerves to be conſidered, that it doth not follow a man is ſingular in his opinions, becauſe they are not to be found in *a harmony of Confeſſions.* On the contrary, of thoſe that have taken up their opinions, and continue in them, becauſe, after fair trial, they judge them to be right, not going juſt as they were led, the greateſt number may be on his ſide of the queſtion. Or taking an equal number of men, of equal probity, learning, and abilities, will we ſay they are more likely to find the *truth* in a Synod, than out of it? One would think the contrary; becauſe when alone by themſelves, they have their thoughts more about them, are capable of canvaſſing things with greater care and diſpaſſionateneſs, and (which is no ſmall matter) are not ſo much under the management of a few *leading men*, who govern things more by art, or authority, than by *Reaſon.* And as for the want of *humility*, which is ſo often charged on a Miniſter's exerciſing a right of private judgment, one would rather imagine the ſuſpicion of pride would lie on their ſide who take upon them to judge, not only for themſelves, or for all others of the ſame age, but for the Church of God, in all following ages. If this be not inconſiſtent with humility, I do not ſee how every man's judging

for himſelf, leaving to every other man the ſame liberty, can be ſo, eſpecially when every man muſt give an account of himſelf to God. Why ſhould they judge for me, who are not to anſwer for me?

But is this all the reſpect we have for the memory of our firſt *Reformers* and *Martyrs*, to depart ſo lightly from the faith, in which they died? My reply is, if by *their Faith* be meant the *Proteſtant Faith*, or the pure undefiled Religion of Chriſt, as oppoſed to the corruptions of *Popery*, the more diligently we ſtudy the *Scriptures*, and the more we uſe our underſtandings in Religion, the leſs danger there is of our forſaking this *Faith*. But if by *their Faith* be underſtood certain *Tenets*, which, as they do not enter into the character of a *Proteſtant*, ſo were never yet proved to belong to Primitive Chriſtianity, there is no great harm done, if in theſe things we do not think as our *Fathers of the Reformation* did; nor is it any *reflection* at all upon them who, having their thoughts and time ſo much imployed in detecting and reforming the abuſes of *Popery*, had not that *leiſure* (I might have added, nor thoſe *advantages*) for reviſing and clearing all the parts of the Chriſtian ſcheme, by a more thorough knowledge of the ſcriptures, that their ſucceſſors have had; and, beſides that, were naturally prejudiced in favour of ſome notions, for their ap-

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prehended oppoſition to certain errors of the Romiſh Church, not duly conſidering, that this oppoſition might be of the ſame nature with that, which two extremes have one to the other.

And whereas it is eſteemed ſuch an honour to ſome opinions, that they were the opinions of our *Engliſh*, and other *Proteſtant Martyrs*, (not to obſerve that they were not ſo properly the opinions of the men, as of the times) what if it ſhall be found that the Chriſtian Fathers and Martyrs (indeed, the Chriſtian Church in general) of the three firſt ages, held different notions? I hope this prejudice in favour of one ſide, may at leaſt be ſufficient to balance that now mentioned on the other; and that this is actually the caſe, in reſpect of ſome notions which have borrowed their name from an eminent *Reformer* (ſuch as that of mens being good or bad in conſequence of an *abſolute decree*, which is the ſame as by *neceſſity*, not by the uſe or abuſe of their freedom of choice, *&c.*) will hardly be diſputed.

After all, the perſon I am ſpeaking of is far from ſetting up his private ſenſe as ſuperior to that of the reſt of mankind, is ready to miſtruſt his judgment when he hath the concurrence of few or no thinking and ſerious perſons in it; is not fond of differing from others for differing's ſake; on

the contrary, he would be much better pleaſed to have no occaſion to leave the beaten track; he is thankful for all the aſſiſtances he receives from others, be they who they will, in finding out the true ſenſe of Scripture, neither vainly conceiting himſelf about theſe helps, nor aſhamed to confeſs his obligation for them; and many times where he ſees reaſon (or thinks he ſees it) to depart from the judgment of worthy men, as he does it with all *modeſty*, ſo, perhaps, ſomething or other droped in their Writings hath ſtruck the light which leads him to diſcern their miſtakes, or by ſome *common principles* upon which they very much inſiſt as well as others (*e. g.* the infinite goodneſs of God, the ſincerity of his promiſes and declarations, the preheminence of the love of God beyond all the poſitive parts of Religion, and the neceſſity of practical holineſs) he is able to prove the erroneouſneſs of ſome notions which they graff upon theſe noble principles, by ſhewing that they cannot poſſibly grow upon ſuch a ſtock, to which they are likely to do more hurt than they can receive advantage from it.

Yet notwithſtanding this liberty of judging is ſo very evident from Reaſon and Scripture, and it be managed with all the ſubmiſſion conſiſtent with a due regard to truth, and the authority of the only Head and Lawgiver of the Church, whoever does

not

not expreſs a like reverence for *human Creeds* as for the Word of God, is ſure to be cenſured by almoſt every party, though there is no party but would give him leave to have as little reſpect as he pleaſed for every other *Creed* and *Catechiſm*, as far as it differed from their own. Be it ſo, (ſince ſuch is the prevailing humour of mankind) he that ſtudies in all things to ſhew himſelf approved unto God, will not be much moved by this. He is ſure that it is not for the ſake of his eaſe, or worldly intereſt, that he challenges a right to think and examine; ſince he ſhould conſult theſe much better by *believing every thing, and diſputing nothing*; and he is conſcious to himſelf that he does not act out of pride, and a ſpirit of contradiction; and therefore whatever be the preſent temporal diſadvantage to himſelf, he is determined to perſevere, contented to go through good report, and through evil report, and to receive bad uſage together with good.

11. Is the ſame perſon ſatisfied in his own mind, that having found the truth by diligent and impartial enquiry, and duly weighed all the circumſtances of the caſe, he is obliged to ſpeak his thoughts with an honeſt freedom, and to ſet himſelf to detect and confute received errors, as he hopes to have this part of his conduct approved by him who hath put him into the Mi-

niſtry? Being thus perſuaded, he does not heſitate what he ſhall do, but is ready to hazard every thing of his own rather than napkin up the truth when it ought to be brought into light. It is here ſuppoſed, that he hath calmly conſidered both the *truth* and *importance* of his opinions before he troubles others with them, not chuſing to riſque his own reputation, or the peace of any part of the Chriſtian Church, upon points more doubtful and difficult, than neceſſary to be known; and, in ſtating the reaſons *for* and *againſt* ſpeaking out *the whole truth*, hath been very careful to caſt up the account right. He will not indifferently, in all places and companies, and upon all occaſions, in ſeaſon, or out of ſeaſon, utter all his mind; which would be acting too much like *Solomon*'s fool, whoſe [m] *wiſdom faileth him*, when he *walketh by the way* ſide, inſomuch that he *ſaith to every one* he meets, *that he is a fool.*

He hath alſo that regard to the weak ſide of human nature, always tenacious of old opinions, as to make trial firſt of what can be done in a leſs open manner, and being crafty he endeavours to catch his hearers with an innocent guile; ſtealing away their notions from them while he leaves them their phraſes, and then afterwards, when he hath prepoſſeſſed them with other notions,

[m] Eccleſ. x. 3.

tions, prevailing with them to reſign their phraſes too, as no way proper to expreſs the notions they have now entertained. Or he ſees ground to think that an unreſerved declaration of his ſentiments, either becauſe of his age which would not add any authority to what he ſaith, or for ſome other reaſon, would do more hurt than good, and therefore he hath his faith to himſelf till a more favourable opportunity offers for making it publick.

But if, after long waiting, ſuch an opportunity as he wiſhes is never likely to happen, but falſe opinions are induſtriouſly propagated, and with more zeal and bitterneſs than uſual, and handed down from fathers to children as *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, from which they muſt not deviate an hair's-breath; if he hath inſtances before him of the ill effects of certain religious principles upon the *lives* of any, whom he is not able to recover out of the ſnare of the Devil any other way than by ſhewing them that though they *reaſon right*, yet it is from *wrong principles*; and upon the *tempers* of a great many more, rendering them either morooſe, conceited, cenſorious, or melancholy and diſpirited in Religion: and if, moreover, his not ſaying any thing againſt ſuch principles, is deemed an argument of his being a friend to them, or the effect of a mean and cowardly

ly ſpirit; when the honour of Religion, the ſafety of ſouls, and his own uſefulneſs are thus at ſtake, he dares be valiant for the truth, and can, with pleaſure, ſacrifice every thing for the ſake of it, when he knows it will not be *the ſacrifice of fools.* Not that he will render railing for railing; but contrariwiſe, *Reaſon* for *Invective*, and *Bleſſing* for *Curſing*. He will, for *prudence-ſake*, ſpeak his mind in a manner the *leaſt offenſive* that is poſſible, and forbear giving ſome things as bad names as they deſerve; chuſing rather to expoſe the *deformity* of *error*, by ſetting the *truth* in all its *amiableneſs* and *evidence* over againſt it, than in ſtrong and direct terms.

It is not improbable that he will be thought an *enemy* by many (eſpecially when ſome who have their private ends to ſerve by it, ſuggeſt that he is ſo) *becauſe he tells them the truth*; even though he tells it them with the moſt inſinuating ſoftneſs and gentleneſs, and cannot keep ſilence with a good conſcience. When this happens out, he is ſorry for it, more for *their ſakes* than his *own*; but ſtill holds to his reſolution, not to be kept by the *fear of man* from *openly aſſerting* the truth when it is neceſſary, any more than to be awed and checked by the *authority of man* in ſettling the important queſtion, *What is truth?*

III. Af-

III. After revolving the matter in his moſt unprejudiced and deliberate thoughts, is it his judgment that by ſuch a particular way of preaching he ſhall do moſt good, promote the knowledge and practice of true Chriſtianity more than by another, which, it may be, is more agreeable to his own inclination, or will better ſtrike the taſte of his hearers? If theſe are his thoughts, he is not for pleaſing himſelf and others at the expence of what is of much greater importance than any thing *merely entertaining* can be. Was a Miniſter to conſult nothing elſe but the exerciſe and improvement of his own genius, and to uſe the method and ſtyle which pleaſed him moſt in the writings or preaching of other men, and which would give moſt ſcope to his imagination (it may be naturally lively and fruitful) poſſibly his Subjects would be too often of a ſpeculative nature, and more curious than profitable; his way of thinking would be too far removed from that which is common; his reaſoning be too cloſe and abſtract, and his language too laboured, or abound too much with ornaments for the meaning to be eaſily come at by ordinary people. Which now ſhall he do, *pleaſe himſelf*, or *profit his hearers?* The queſtion does not require much time to be anſwered by one who conſtantly ſtudies to ſhew himſelf approved unto God. He will not, in conpliment to a few, overlook the reſt

reſt of his audience who are the greater number; nor, barely to make his court to the greater number, go into a manner of preaching which he himſelf is convinced to be wrong, and will be diſliked by the more judicious few. He knows a way in which he could, with very little pains, procure to himſelf the applauſe of ſome ſort of people, and at the ſame time make them believe they were greatly edified too. When he was to prove a thing he could make uſe of arguments, which, though really inconcluſive, ſhould do more to perſuade a great many of the truth of what he aimed to eſtabliſh than the moſt ſolid proofs could do. And without enquiring after the true ſenſe of Scripture, which is not found without ſome trouble and pains, he could by only following the ſound of words, and idly playing with metaphors, get himſelf the reputation of a *profound Divine*.

What more eaſy than for a man (if his conſcience will permit him) to appropriate to himſelf and his Brethren the name of *Experimental Preachers*, and to the people of the ſame way that of *Experienced Chriſtians?* To have the *Name* of *Chriſt* often in his mouth, taking no care to repreſent the Chriſtian Religion ſo as that it may be an honour to that name; a name dear to all true Chriſtians, becauſe they love their Saviour in ſincerity; and pleaſing to a great many

many others, becauſe they ſtrongly conceit themſelves to be *loved* by him? What more eaſy than to talk much of *Faith*, *Juſtification*, the *Righteouſneſs of Chriſt*, *free Grace*, and the like, not from the *Scriptures* (diligently ſtudied and compared one part with another, ſo as to make the whole a conſiſtent ſcheme of doctrine) but from certain Writers, whoſe works are of ſuch authority with ſome, that they may be called *Deutero-canonical?* To ſay the very ſame things that have been ſaid a thouſand times over, and in the ſame ſet of phraſes and expreſſions, without giving the leaſt new light to any ſubject, or making people a jot wiſer than they were before?

In fine, what more eaſy than to ſay *little* of the *precepts* of the Goſpel, and *nothing* in proof of the *reaſonableneſs* of them? To infuſe ſuſpicions and jealouſies of *Reaſon* as no friend to *Religion?* And to make general declamations about the weakneſs and corruption of *human nature*, and the inſufficiency of natural light, which *comparatively underſtood*, and with proper *limitations* added, would be true enough, but are far from being ſo when *ſpoken abſolutely*, and tend to give the hearers very wrong notions in Religion? What more eaſy than all theſe things? And yet what more certain way among ſome perſons to ſecure the name of a *Goſpel Preacher?* Explaining in a rational

tional intelligible manner the *grounds* of our obligations to the Redeemer of the world, together with the *nature*, the *design*, and the *intrinsick excellence* of the Gospel Dispensation; setting before men the terms of acceptance; telling them their duty plainly and fully, the *encouragements* they have to perform it, (from the promise of *Divine Assistance*, the tranquility and happiness of a religious life *at present*, and the hope of *eternal glory*) and the extreme *peril* of neglecting it; without adding such exceptions and limitations (as to *the persons intended*) as tend to enervate the force of the most powerful motives and earnest exhortations; this way of preaching is cold, and legal, and unedifying, and not to be compared with the former. But though the former way would be easier to himself as well as more agreeable to the major part of his audience, till their judgments were more improved, yet he cannot allow himself thus to play the cheat with his hearers, amusing their fancies, and working up their affections, without any thing to support them, instead of enlightening their understandings, inspiring them with the love of a holy as well as a crucified Jesus, and bringing them to esteem and practise the substantial virtues of the christian life.

IV. Is he persuaded that *zeal* for the *truth* is no way inconsistent with *charity* for

for thoſe that are apprehended to be in *error?* He does not think his *charity* (proceeding from that very temper of mind on which the Goſpel lays ſo much ſtreſs) a thing to be aſhamed of. What though by this means he himſelf forfeits the *charity* of perſons of more *zeal* than *knowledge*, and more *conceit* than either, and they have a worſe opinion of him only for having a favourable opinion of ſome that think not as they do, or as he himſelf does; ſcarce allowing that he can be a *good Chriſtian*, who is not a *good party-man?* He pities thoſe that are of ſuch a narrow ſpirit, but is too honeſt, with his preſent view of things, to do as they do; joining to hunt down a man as ſoon as the common cry is againſt him, when he profeſſes the greateſt regard to the honour and authority of Chriſt, and hath nothing but what is chriſtian in his behaviour. He is not haſty to believe another man is in opinions which ſeem to him evidently to contradict the Chriſtian Revelation; does not make the difference wider than it really is, nor lay more ſtreſs upon it than it will bear; takes not up every flying report of a perſon's having *ſaid this* and *done that*; does not love to fix names which he knows will hurt the reputation and leſſen the uſefulneſs of another Miniſter, nor eſteem it good evidence of the truth of any ſtory told to his diſadvantage, that he is one who

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does not vote and ſubſcribe as he could wiſh him to do. Can I, in my heart, believe, O moſt righteous and merciful God, that this is ſuch dealing as thou wilt approve? Or is this doing to others as I think it equitable they ſhould do to me? Or as I actually do to thoſe for whom I have a tender affection, or on whom I have a dependance, when they go aſtray?

He ſtudiouſly avoids entering into party-quarrels, is very ſenſible of his being himſelf frail and fallible, takes not upon him to judge the *hearts* of men, and conſiders that it is not ſo much the *knowledge* as the *love* of the truth; not ſo much *faith* as the *good diſpoſition* of mind from whence it flows, that renders a man *acceptable to God*; that one man may *believe* the truth he *hates* (as *the Devil* we are told, *believes and trembles)* another in things not eſſential to Religion miſs the truth he loves, and is continually *enquiring after*. He never yet heard it ſuggeſted that *that* paſſage of St. *Paul* is corrupted in our preſent Bibles, *and now abide faith, hope, charity, theſe three, but the greateſt of theſe is charity*; nor did he ever know any one pretend to aſſert in words of that noble deſcription of charity, by the ſame inſpired Writer, that, when filled up as it ought to be, it would run thus; *charity ſuffereth long* (the faults of thoſe that are of the right party) *and is kind* (to them.)

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Charity envieth not (thoſe who humbly take their leſſons from us, and never preſume to *rival*, much leſs, *out ſhine* us.) *Charity vaunteth not itſelf* (where there is no temptation to do it.) *Is not puffed up* (unleſs it be, when we have got an enemy at an advantage, and can trample him under our feet.) *Does not behave itſelf unſeemly* (except when a good cauſe requires it.) *Seeketh not her own* (when ſhe hath nothing of her own to ſeek.) *Is not eaſily provoked* (where nothing is done to provoke it.) *Thinketh no evil* (of a few choſen favourites.) *Rejoiceth not in iniquity* (*received*, but, *done.*) *But rejoiceth in the truth* (when it is apprehended not to favour the oppoſite-ſide.) *Beareth all things* (that need little or no patience to bear them.) *Believeth all things* (to the advantage of its own, and diſadvantage of the adverſe party.) *Hopeth all things* (good to the one, and evil to the other.) *And endureth all things* (*all things*, where only *the precepts of the Goſpel* are broken, but *nothing* where the truth of certain *opinions*, or expediency of certain *injunctions purely human*, is called in queſtion.) What a deformed picture would theſe inconſiſtent additions make of one of the moſt beautiful in the world, as it is drawn by the pen of an inſpired Apoſtle!

I ſhall ſhut up this head with a remarkable Story, which I have read—" That when

" *Gomarus*, accuſing *Arminius* before the " *States*, ſaid, that the opinions of his Col- " legue were ſuch in the articles controvert- " ed between them, that he, for his part, " would not appear with them before God; " ſome perſons, a little moved with ſuch " an inſtance of cenſorious zeal, could not " forbear declaring that they had rather ap- " pear before the divine tribunal with the " *Faith* of *Arminius* than with the *Chari-* " *ty* of *Gomarus*."

I muſt entreat your patience, while I little more than mention a few Conſiderations, among many, that recommend this excellent and amiable character. You will agree with me, Sir, that,

It is a conſideration which muſt afford great peace and ſupport to an honeſt mind, that whoever ſtudies to ſhew himſelf approved unto God, is ſure to be approved of him; for he is not a hard maſter, who reaps where he hath not ſown, or a reſpector of perſons in judgment. It is true, he requires ſincerity of all, but ſince that does not ſignify any particular *degrees* of ſtrength and capacity of ſervice, given to ſome, and not to others, or particular heights of perfection, not attainable by all, but only a faithful improvement of the abilities and opportunities we have, it muſt be every one's inexcuſable fault, if he be not ſincere. Beſides, that this want of ſincerity can never-

ver be charged upon the perſon I have been deſcribing, who is able to ſay (proper allowances being made for the imperfections of human nature, and for the great diſtance between the two characters) as his bleſſed Maſter did, that he ſeeketh not his own will, or his own glory, but the will, and the glory of his Father in heaven.

Conſider further, that having approved yourſelf unto God, you will not fail of being *ſelf approved.* And this is no ſmall matter, for a man to ſtand well with himſelf. As far as you are aſſured of the approbation of the great Judge of heaven and earth (and you are aſſured of this in the ſame degree, as you are conſcious of an unfeigned active deſire to pleaſe him) you cannot but have rejoicing in yourſelf, and your joy no man taketh from you. It is a reaſonable joy, becauſe founded in *truth*; and it is a joy in ſome ſort divine, becauſe ariſing from thoſe things which render a man like God, ſince God approves none but thoſe in whom he ſees ſome traces of this likeneſs. A diligent endeavour to ſhew ourſelves approved unto God beſpeaks the participation of a divine nature, that is, a right temper of mind, and a holy and heavenly life, with a care to perform the duties of our particular profeſſion as becometh the ſervants of the all-knowing, and all-perfect God; a character as honourable in itſelf as any can be.

You may add, that the man whoſe character this is, will, *ordinarily*, ſecure the approbation of thoſe whoſe good opinion and good word is moſt valuable. And, as to others, he may hope to gain upon them by little and little; provided, he purſues a ſteady inflexible courſe of piety, charity, and moderation. Nay his very enemies (if after all he hath any) will not be ſo forward to open their mouths againſt him, unleſs their prejudices are great indeed, and their tempers more than ordinarily bad, or there be ſomewhat elſe very ſingular in the caſe. [n] *In all things ſhewing thyſelf a pattern of good works; in doctrine ſhewing uncorruptneſs, gravity, ſincerity, ſound ſpeech which cannot be condemned; that he who is of the contrary part may be more aſhamed, having no evil thing to ſay of you.* But ſuppoſing the worſt, yet,

Conſider the ſervice that is done to Religion by examples of a tried integrity, and univerſal goodneſs. Religion does, upon the whole, gain by ſuch characters as to the reputation it bears in the world. And, in truth, were not its credit a little kept up by ſuch, they who were ſtrangers to it, or bore it no good will, would be ready to ſay that Chriſtianity was not a Religion calculated to promote the freedom of the mind,

[n] Tit. ii. 7, 8.

mind, to enlarge the heart, to ſweeten the paſſions, and to unite mankind in the bonds of love; but, on the contrary, to ſplit them into parties and factions, and both to heighten and juſtify their rage one againſt another; to make a narrow, angry, unconverſable temper, ſtill more ſo, and to eſtabliſh every where a ſpirit of ſuperſtition. Thus would ſome be apt to ſpeak evil of things which they did not know, judging of them from the general behaviour of thoſe who talked moſt about them. Thanks be to God, that, as our holy Religion itſelf, viewed in the writings of the Apoſtles, does not give the leaſt countenance to ſuch a charge, ſo there are examples, (to be found I truſt, in all parties,) which prove it to be unjuſt. Would to God they were more! It is worth any one's while, that wiſhes well to Religion, to be among them, whatever it coſts him. Once more,

Conſider, that if, during the courſe of this mortal life, and of your Miniſterial Labours, you ſtudy to ſhew yourſelf approved unto God, great will be your reward in heaven. And how much better is it to have our reward laid up there, than to enjoy it here upon earth? This is our anchor ſure and ſtedfaſt, which keeps the mind from fluctuating in this unquiet ſtormy world. You ſhall have praiſe of God for your diligence, and faithfulneſs, and ſin-

cere endeavours to know and do his will, whether you have praiſe of men, or no. It is a ſmall matter for you, or me, or any other perſon, to be judged of man's judgment; he that judgeth us is the Lord. And when God juſtifieth, who is he that condemneth? Thoſe very things that were the great articles upon which men accuſed, reviled, and condemned us, (if for conſcience towards God, we ſuffer wrongfully) will be mentioned to our honour at laſt; not without a ſilent reproach to thoſe, otherwiſe good men, who hearkening too much to their paſſions, were not ſo juſt, much leſs ſo kind, to their fellow-ſervants as they ought to have been. Did ever Maſter pay his ſervants as our great Lord will do his, with honour in the preſence of all his angels, with reſt from all their labours, with an inheritance incorruptible, and a crown of righteouſneſs and glory that fadeth not away?

Wherefore, wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen your heart. You have the prayers of your Brethren in the Miniſtry, and of the Church of God that you may obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful; and have your faithfulneſs rewarded with a great deal of comfort and ſucceſs. Stir up the gifts of God that are in you. Cheriſh in yourſelf thoſe noble principles of love to God, to Jeſus,

and

and to the ſouls of men. Perſuaded of the excellency of a beneficent temper, of the worth of ſouls, which are immortal, and the worthleſneſs of a dying world, eſteem it the greateſt happineſs of your life, and moſt acceptable way of glorifying, imitating, and ſerving God, to do good to men, eſpecially in their higheſt intereſts. Be kind to the unkind, have charity for the uncharitable, comfort the feeble minded, ſupport the weak, be patient towards all men; and by manifeſtation of the truth, let it be your aim to commend yourſelf to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God. In a word, take heed to the Miniſtry which you have received of the Lord to fulfill it; and, that you may not be too much affected with the difficulties and diſcouragements you meet with, frequently think of the ſuperior goodneſs of the work to which you have devoted yourſelf, the aſſiſtence and pleaſure you will have in it, if you are ſincere, and the infinite greatneſs of the promiſed reward.

The End supposed to be aimed at by a faithful Minister of the Gospel, explained, and recommended in

A

CHARGE

Delivered at the

ORDINATION

Of the REVEREND

Mr. *Daniel Harson*,

AT

Moreton-Hampstead, Devon.

July 27, 1737.

The End ſuppoſed to be aimed at by a faithful Miniſter of the Goſpel, &c.

AS the truth of the *Chriſtian Religion* appears in the ſuperior excellence of its doctrines and precepts, and the excellence of theſe in their manifeſt tendency to promote the glory of God, and the happineſs of mankind; ſo the great uſefulneſs of the *Chriſtian Miniſtry* is alike obvious to all conſidering perſons, from the original deſign of it, to inſtruct men in this excellent, this divine, Religion, and to perſuade them to live agreeably to it, in certain hope of the reward of eternal life through *Jeſus Chriſt* our *Lord:* the ſerious thought of which muſt yield very great ſatisfaction to all ſincere, intelligent, Chriſtians. And I particularly mention it for your encouragement, Sir, who have been now ſeparated to this ſacred office, as well as theirs who have called you to labour among them in the word and doctrine, and of any others that are preſent,

preſent, and witneſſes on this ſolemn occaſion.

When, with the dignity and importance of the paſtoral care, there is a happy concurrence of the qualifications of the perſons devoting themſelves to it (which we have good reaſon to think is the caſe here) no proſpect can be more agreeable, no juſter ground of rejoicing, to the Church of Chriſt.

In the few things of which I would briefly put you in remembrance at this time, I ſhall take my riſe from the Apoſtle *Paul*'s exhortation to his Son *Timothy*, 1 Eph. iv. 16.

TAKE HEED TO THY SELF, AND TO THY DOCTRINE; CONTINUE IN THEM; FOR IN DOING THIS, THOU SHALT BOTH SAVE THYSELF, AND THEM THAT HEAR THEE.

You ſee, Sir, here is the *end* ſuppoſed to be aimed at by a faithful Miniſter of the Goſpel, *viz. his own ſalvation, and the ſalvation of thoſe that hear him*; together with the means preſcribed for the attainment of it, *taking heed to himſelf and to his doctrine*; in doing which, and ſo continuing, he hath the proſpect of ſucceſs to excite and inſpirit him.

Can there be a nobler end, and of nearer concernment to us all, than that here propoſed?

poſed? For by *ſalvation*, in the *Goſpel* ſenſe of the word, every one knows the higheſt happineſs to be underſtood of which man is capable; the utmoſt perfection of all his faculties, and affluence of the moſt ſatisfying delights, in the preſence and injoyment of God to eternity: for he is both the ſole *author* and the ſupreme *object* of this felicity, to whom, as the eternal fountain of all good, be glory forever. It is [a] *to the praiſe of the glory of his grace, that he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* The glory of his attributes is the final reſult of all his works, of *Creation*, *Providence*, and *Redemption*; in which therefore we are to terminate our regard.

And when we conſider the neceſſity of making each of theſe a part of our *chief end*, with the inſeparable connection, and natural ſubordination, there is betwixt them; it muſt appear ſtrange, that in a caſe ſo plain, and where all ſides appeal to *Reaſon* and *Scripture* as the common rule of deciſion, there ſhould be ſuch a diverſity (I was going to have ſaid contrariety) in the ſentiments of men about theſe things: or, if not in their *ſentiments themſelves*, yet in their manner of explaining them; one repreſenting *ſelf-love*, another *benevolence*, a third a *zeal for the glory of God*, as in effect the *ſole principle* which over-rules and ſwal-

[a] Eph. i. 6.

ſwallows up the other two. Which, perhaps, may *in part* be owing to their not attending to the following plain diſtinction, *viz.* that, if we ſpeak of their reſpective *dignity* and *importance*, it muſt be acknowledged, that the firſt in order is the *glory of God*, next to that the *general good*, and in the third and laſt place *private felicity*. But if we conſider the natural progreſs af the mind in its operations, we begin with ſeeking our own happineſs, then, together with our ideas, enlarge our deſires too, to the happineſs of others; and from thence riſe to the glory of God, as the furtheſt limit of our view; while, from an inward conviction of the neceſſary relation between them, and the mutual happy influence they have upon one another, we jointly purſue all three. Nor is there any need of our being ſolicitous about tbe reſpective degree of ſtrength with which they act upon us; this being an inquiry more curious than uſeful, and, generally ſpeaking, not ſo very eaſy to be reſolved. It is enough, that each of them powerfully determines us, and in perfect concert with the other two.

Thou ſhalt ſave thyſelf. This is one part of the motive made uſe of by the Apoſtle in order to engage *Timothy* to the vigorous diſcharge of his duty; not barely ſignifying what would be the effect of his taking the courſe here directed to (of which afterwards) but

but what he might and ought to *propoſe to himſelf*, and what the Apoſtle takes it for granted he did propoſe, for his encouragement in well-doing.

Self-love is an original affection of our nature; and the proper object of *ſelf-love* is *ſelf-intereſt*, or happineſs, *truly ſo called*. Nor does Religion aim to extinguiſh this natural principle in us, or oblige us to endeavour it, but only teach us how to make a right uſe of it, by the knowledge it gives us of our chief good, and final felicity.

Regard that as your higheſt intereſt, which is really ſuch; aſpire to the happineſs ſet before you in the Goſpel; and then, that you are *ſelf-intereſted*, in this ſenſe of the word, will be not your crime, but your virtue, a commendation, not a reproach; not in the leaſt interfering with the deſire of pleaſing and glorifying God, and contributing to the happineſs of your fellow-creatures, but adding freſh life and ſtrength to it. Unleſs you are concerned for your own real happineſs, you will never be ſo for that of others; nor for the honour of the Supreme Being, of whom you can have no very exalted apprehenſions, while you repreſent him not to yourſelf as the original fountain of perfection and happineſs to his intelligent creatures. Nothing will awaken the mind of man, naturally indolent and ſluggiſh, like the proſpect of an eternal

eternal heaven, the abode of holy and happy ſpirits, of ſacred joys, and everlaſting reſt; the hope of arriving at theſe bleſſed manſions, on the one hand, and the fear of coming ſhort of them, on the other. Knowing the *mercies* and the *terrors* of the *Lord*, you will be the more earneſt to perſuade men to *flee from the wrath to come*, and to *lay hold on eternal life*.

Begin therefore with the care of your own ſoul. Conſider well its nature and dignity, forget not its danger; labour after the aſſurance of your own intereſt in the favour of God, and title to the promiſed reward; and the peace and ſatisfaction hence reſulting will infuſe a ſtrange vigour into your faculties, quicken your zeal and alacrity in the ſervice of your heavenly Maſter, and render every part of your work much more eaſy and delightful.

Nor is there any fear of your over-doing it; or occaſion for your diſtinguiſhing ſo nicely, as ſome have done, betwixt being influenced by the conſideration of your own happineſs, *as your own*, and *as a part* of the happineſs of the *whole*, or a means of advancing the *glory of God*; the latter of which they contend for, without allowing of the former: this is refining upon things till the very ſubſtance of them is quite gone, and can anſwer no end, that I ſee, but making ſome perſons *conceited*, with an imagination

gination of their having ſoared ſo much above the common pitch, and others ſad, that ought not to be made ſo. When we are enjoined to love our neighbour as [b] ourſelves (not more than ourſelves) and have the example of *Moſes*, and of a much greater than *Moſes*, our *bleſſed Lord*, recorded for our imitation, one of whom choſe to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, becauſe he had [c] *reſpect to the recompence of reward*, the other for the [d] *joy ſet before him*, willingly *endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame*; in theſe, and ſo in other places, we have our duty ſimply propoſed to us, without the leaſt hint of any danger we are in of loving ourſelves too well, and ſetting too high a value upon our own happineſs, ſo as to paſs over the love of God, and our neighbour.

You need not be told, that as a *Chriſtian*, and much more as a *Chriſtian Miniſter*, you ſhould extend your good wiſhes and endeavours yet further, and ſeek to ſave others as well as yourſelf. *Thou ſhalt ſave thyſelf, and them that hear thee.* Provided you are really ſolicitous about your own ſalvation, any ſuch admonition as this will be little wanted. You will not, you cannot, in that caſe have reſpect to your *own things* only, but will alſo *mind the things of others*; the very nature of theſe ſpiritual

[b] Mat. xxii. 39. [c] Heb. xi. 26. [d] Heb. xii. 2.

and eternal things being ſuch, that the greater the number of the communicants is, the greater in ſome ſenſe is the ſhare of every one, at leaſt as to the ſatisfaction he hath in them. And, there being one heart and one ſoul, no one ſaith that ought of the things he poſſeſſes is his own, but the joy of one is the joy of all. Which, by the way, is a thought that does not much favour the *narrow ſcheme*, which contracts the bounds of the divine mercy, and ſuppoſes the *grace* to be the greater for the fewneſs of thoſe to whom it is ſhewn; as if the happineſs of heaven was not a ſocial thing; and the command [e] *to rejoice with them that rejoice*, did not imply that our joy, and conſequently our obligation to the great author of it, is not the leſs, but the greater for the extenſiveneſs of the divine bounty and goodneſs. I cannot forbear thinking, that had men a greater largeneſs of heart, their *notions* of the love of God would ordinarily be larger too; the defect never lying on God's part.

Let me add, while you are earneſtly contending *to ſave yourſelf*, and *them that hear you*, and todo all the good you can to all, what you feel in your own breaſt will be a ſufficient conviction of the falſity of their notion, who aſſert all *benevolence* to be nothing elſe but *ſelf-love* in diſguiſe, differing from

[e] Rom. xii. 15.

from what is commonly ſo called, only in this, that in one caſe ſelf-love goes more *directly* to its end, in the other more round about, by the way of common good, which it conſiders and values merely as a means of private happineſs. Only obſerve the workings of your own mind, and you will find this to be a groſs miſrepreſentation of human nature, and exceeding unjuſt; for though *ſelf-love* be in nature prior to every other affection, and a man ſuppoſed not to love himſelf, could not love any perſon or thing beſides; becauſe having no happineſs of his own, he could have no notion what the happineſs of another meant, nor indeed any ſuch principle as love and deſire in his nature; yet the idea of *benevolence*, or the good-will we bear to others, is plainly diſtinct from that of *ſelf-love*, and may be proved to be ſo by the pleaſure immediately ariſing from the happineſs of our fellow-creatures, eſpecially when in a great degree owing to us; for which pleaſure there would be no room, ſuppoſing every man were conſcious to himſelf, that the happineſs or miſery of all other perſons were alike indifferent to him, any further than his own happened to be connected with theirs; like thoſe who, being embarked in the ſame veſſel, and joint ſharers in the profits of the voyage, ſhould heartily wiſh the preſervation of the ſhip, and help towards it, but

each with a view only to himſelf, otherwiſe not in the leaſt concerned whether it arrived ſafe to the intended haven, or ſunk to the bottom of the ocean.

Social affections are a credit to human nature. There is a pleaſure in the exerciſe of them, where only ſome inferior good is to be procured; but the divineſt ſatisfaction is when we befriend others in reſpect of their higheſt, their eternal, intereſts. The *ſalvation of ſouls* is a glorious end indeed, the vaſt importance of the miniſterial office is never more conſpicuous than in this way of conſidering it; as in this view of it, every one who ingages in it with right aims, and hath generous affections beating in his breaſt, muſt be *diſpoſed*, as well as reckon himſelf *obliged*, to do his utmoſt to prevent the miſery and ruin of his fellow-chriſtians; thoſe eſpecially of whom he hath a more particular charge, and to direct, and quicken, and aſſiſt them in their purſuit after everlaſting happineſs. If the gain of the whole world cannot countervail the loſs of a ſingle ſoul, what more worthy the ambition of a truly great mind, than not to ſave one ſoul only (though that would richly reward the pains taken to this end) but many ſouls from death, and to conduct them in the paths of righteouſneſs and immortality? Think of this, and you will hardly need any other motive to the faithful

faithful diſcharge of your duty.——And yet I cannot forbear mentioning this further conſideration, that in labouring for the ſalvation of immortal ſouls, you will have the nobleſt of all examples, that of the Son of God, the great friend and lover of ſouls, to animate you, who for the redemption of the world, lapſed into a ſtate of extreme ignorance and corruption, and to recover that immortality which was loſt by the ſin of man, became incarnate and died. This was the travel of his ſoul, to ranſom the ſouls of men; the effect of which when he ſees he is ſatisfied, [f] finding the pleaſure of the Lord to proſper in his hand, and bleſſed with a numerous ſeed of righteous perſons like himſelf, prepared to injoy thoſe glorious rewards which he procures for, and will finally beſtow upon them.——Though this ſingle inſtance of love to the ſouls of men exceeds all others taken together, and ſhould, and will, have more weight with every one truly devoted to the ſervice of his great Lord, yet it may not be amiſs, nay it may be of great uſe, to recollect any other examples of this kind in a lower ſphere; eſpecially that of the Apoſtle *Paul*, who writing to the *Philippians* appeals to God as his record, how earneſtly [g] *he longed after them all in the bowels of Chriſt*; tells the *Corinthians*, that [h] *they were in his heart to*

[f] Iſaiah liii. 10, 11. [g] Phil. i. 8. [h] 2 Cor. vii. 3.

die and to live with them; and the *Theſſalonians*, that he reckoned himſelf *to live*, *when they ſtood faſt in the Lord*; whoſe [i] *heart's deſire and prayer to God for Iſrael was*, *that they might be ſaved*; ready were it proper, [k] *to wiſh himſelf accurſed from Chriſt* (cut off from all the privileges of external communion with his church) *for their ſakes*, and by a violent death [l] *to be offered up to God on the ſacrifice and ſervice of their faith*, whom he had converted to the profeſſion of the Goſpel.

In a word then, the end I ſuppoſe you to have in view, *viz.* everlaſting happineſs or ſalvation, both your own and that of others, with the glory of God as the ſupreme author, conducter, and finiſher of this vaſt deſign, muſt, duly conſidered, prove a mighty incentive to diligence and reſolution in the uſe of all thoſe means by which it is accompliſhed.

And what the principal of theſe means are, in reſpect of the part which the Miniſters of the Goſpel have in the converſion and ſalvation of ſouls, the Apoſtle hath informed us in theſe words, *Take heed to thyſelf, and to thy doctrine.* For once, ſuppoſe this exhortation directed to you; as in effect it is in the perſon of *Timothy*, and to all others who have taken the paſtoral charge upon them.

Take

[i] 1 Theſ. iii. 8. [k] Rom. x. 1. ix. 3. [l] Phil. ii. 17.

Take heed unto yourſelf. In general, that your character, as a ſincerely good man, a diſciple of Chriſt indeed, be unexceptionable; and, more particularly, that you do not come behind in certain virtues which are likely to have a peculiarly good influence in this matter.

In general, you are to take heed that your character, as a perſon of true chriſtian integrity, be unblemiſhed. Every Miniſter of the Goſpel ought to be *a good man*; this qualification is indiſpenſable. It was formally, by the *Heathens* themſelves, thought a neceſſary qualification for their accompliſhed Orator, that he ſhould be ſo; much more then muſt this be neceſſary for the *Chriſtian Orator*, whoſe ſole buſineſs almoſt lies in perſuading men to be good, that they may be happy. I muſt be ſure not to want that myſelf, of the abſolute neceſſity of which I am continually endeavouring to convince others; and, while I warn them againſt being deceived with a wrong notion of genuine vital Religion, or of their own ſtate and condition, not to be miſtaken myſelf in theſe things, leſt by any means, when I have preached to others, I myſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.

Nay, ſimply to be good ſhould not content you, but you ſhould endeavour to excel; to have the evidence of your ſincerity as bright and ſtrong, and the objections

againſt it as few as may be. This is the more needful, not only that you may be an example to the flock, which every Miniſter ought to be, and teach men their duty with the greater force and authority, but to put to ſilence the enemies of Religion, ſhall I ſay, only, or likewiſe add ſome of the *friends* of it too? I fear this latter is too often the caſe, in the preſent divided ſtate of the Chriſtian Church; that which would otherwiſe be a ſufficient proof of a man's goodneſs in the judgment of common charity, not paſſing for ſuch among thoſe who do not ſo well like him on ſome other accounts. To bear down ſuch prejudices, a perſon muſt not have many failings and blemiſhes; little leſs than demonſtration being admitted, ſometimes, by good men one of another, when they do not ſerve in the ſame party. Why, ſince they are thus unreaſonable, demonſtration let them have, as far as you are capable of giving it, that what they will not grant out of *charity* and *equity*, they may be obliged to do from the irreſiſtible force of *conviction*.

There are certain virtues which you ſhould more peculiarly cultivate, as they are likely to have a particularly good influence in this matter. Such, among others, are humility and meekneſs, temperance, ſincerity, a contempt of every thing mean and ſordid, a peaceable temper, charity, courage

courage in a good cauſe, and, to add no more, prudence.

The more humble and meek you are, ſo as to keep your ſelf-eſteem, and your anger, within due bounds, the more you will reſemble your great Lord and Maſter, in whom theſe amiable qualities were ſo diſtinguiſhing, that he invites his followers to learn them from his example [m]. Maintain a wiſe ſobriety of mind, and ſhew it in your outward behaviour, neither aſſuming honours and preeminences which do not belong to you, nor unſeaſonably and importunately challenging thoſe that do; but rather leaving others to find out, and freely acknowledge what is valuable in you, than pointing it out to them, and thereby making them think you are too ſenſible of it yourſelf.

Thus you will injoy a reſt and tranquillity of ſoul, which you muſt not otherwiſe hope for, and riſe higher in favour both with God and man, according to our Saviour's obſervation, that [n] *he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.* Deſpiſe none, and you will not be deſpiſed by any. Command your own paſſions, and you will have the greater aſcendant over the paſſions of other men.

A well-regulated temperance in reſpect of the pleaſures of ſenſe, alike remote from a ſuperſtitious auſterity on the one hand, and what-

[m] Mat. xi. 29. [n] Luke xiv. 11.

whatever borders on too great delicacy or indulgence on the other, will be of uſe to preſerve your faculties in their clearneſs and vigour, to guard the freedom of your mind, to convince the world that the pleaſures of knowledge, of virtue, and devotion, are the proper happineſs of the man, and ſo eſteemed by you, and to give you the higher reliſh of theſe purer and more ſublime delights.

By *ſimplicity* and *godly ſincerity*, a frank open behaviour, void of all guile and artifice, you will at once gain the eſteem and love of thoſe you converſe with, and be let into their very ſouls, when they can ſee into yours; having no reaſon to ſuſpect you of any deſign upon them, but what you avow, they will give the greater heed to all you ſay, as ſincerely intended for their good.

Eſpecially, as this *ſincerity* is uſually, if not always, joined with an *elevation* and *greatneſs of ſoul*, that makes a man ſcorn every thing mean and ſordid. One of this character never loves money ſo well as, for the ſake of it, to act a niggardly, unfriendly, diſhonourable, not to ſay an unjuſt part; and, if he take the overſight of the flock of God, does it not *for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.* He values riches only for their uſe, not for themſelves, and believes that as God knows what portion of theſe things is ſafeſt and beſt for him upon the whole, he will give it him; conſidering which, he

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can be contented without them, and, as the conſequence of that, will deſcend to no baſe arts to get them, and of what he hath (if he hath more than neceſſaries) will rather be over liberal than too ſparing. Nothing makes a man look ſo truly great in the eyes of the world as this noble diſpoſition, while *covetouſneſs* ſinks the character of any man, and moſt of all of a Miniſter.

Love, follow, and make *peace*. It is the happieſt temper, the moſt divine imployment. Beſides the reward immediately attending a ſtate of tranquillity, you will have an opportunity of doing more good, *the fruit of righteouſneſs* being, in this ſenſe, *ſown in peace*, in a calm halcyon ſeaſon, *by them that make peace*. There are few things, *truth* and *honeſty* excepted, which a man ſhould not be willing to ſacrifice for peace-ſake. And bleſſed are all they who are ſo diſpoſed, [o] *for they ſhall be called the children of God*.

Let your *charity* never fail. Let not a diverſity of ſentiments (but, becauſe this alone is a ſmall thing, I therefore add) or unfair inſinuations and reflections, manifeſt miſrepreſentations, or even deſpiteful and injurious uſage, be able to cool, much leſs to extinguiſh, this ſacred fire in your breaſt. *Do good* to *all*; *think well* of as *many*, and as *long* as you can; and *ſpeak evil* of none. What-

[o] Mat. v. 9.

Whatever ſucceſs a blind intemperate zeal may have for a time, *charity* muſt get the victory in the end.

Nor will your purſuing *peace* and *charity* at all interfere with *boldneſs* and *courage*, and an *inflexible conſtancy*, in a good cauſe. While you allow others a ſort of latitude in thinking and acting, according to the different light and manner in which the ſame things may appear to the minds of ſincere Chriſtians themſelves, you are not to vary a hair's breadth in your own profeſſion and practice from what you apprehend to be right and true. Be zealous, reſolved, and ſtedfaſt, though always with a ſpirit of meekneſs, and a mind open to conviction, from *whomſoever* or from *whenceſoever* it comes. Thus you will beſt anſwer the common objection againſt the advocates for *peace* and *liberty*, and *charity*; that it is not a zeal for theſe things, but an indifference to the principles of Religion, that is the true ſpring and reaſon of their conduct.

Finally; By no means think *prudence*, as long as it is ſuch, and does not degenerate into *craft*, a thing to be aſhamed of; but get as much of it as you can, and make as much uſe of it (always coupling it with *ſincerity*) ſince all you can get will be ſure little enough as times and men now are. I will not ſay, that part of our Saviour's advice

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to his Apoſtles, [p] *be wiſe as ſerpents*, is as much in ſeaſon now at it was at the time of its being firſt given; but this I will venture to ſay, that the preſent is a ſeaſon in which it can very ill be ſpared. A man hath occaſion for a great deal of *prudence*, that his very good be not *evil ſpoken of*. So many notions, tempers, paſſions, intereſts, prejudices, as a Miniſter hath to deal with; ſo many proud, buſy, officious, ill-deſigning men as there are, on the one hand, and ſo many weak, how well-meaning ſoever, on the other; in order to keep clear of all offence, he muſt ſteer with uncommon caution, and, if poſſible, make himſelf a thorough maſter of the art of *prudence*; the *art* I ſay, which hath no other bounds but thoſe which the virtue of *prudence* preſcribes to it. I pray God to quicken you in the purſuit, and aſſiſt you in the attainment of this, and every other good gift; as you have no reaſon to doubt he will, on condition that, humbly ſenſible of your dependance upon him, you entreat the illumination and aids of his Spirit, and do not receive them in vain.

The other head of advice is, *Take heed to your doctrine*; that you teach truth, and nothing but truth, if you can help it, at leaſt nothing apparently inconſiſtent with the fundamental principles of Religion, natural, or revealed; and when I ſay *apparently*, I mean

[p] Mat. x. 16.

mean to every *honeſt mind*, of *tolerable capacity*, and not *clouded* with *prejudice*; which too often happens.

But *what is truth?* And *where* ſhall we find it? As our Saviour foretold, the time would come when they ſhould ſay, *Lo here is Chriſt, or Lo he is there*; ſo fares it with *truth*, amidſt the ſeveral contending parties in the chriſtian world, each pretending to have the ſole poſſeſſion of the true doctrine of Chriſt, and the ſole right of diſpenſing it. If you would know the truth, come to us. But I ſhall venture to ſay in this, as our bleſſed Lord did in the other caſe, *believe it not, go not after them*; which I intend of following them with an implicit faith, and imitating their party-ſpirit; not againſt hearing what they have to ſay for themſelves. To ſeek after truth in this way, laying aſide the *Scriptures*, or underſtanding them by the *comments* of the ſeveral parties, would be a deſperate undertaking. Nay, I do not ſee how a man could come to any determination at all, unleſs he was able to reconcile contradictions, or reſolved right or wrong to ſtick to the ſide he was bred up in, or which ſome ſecular view led him to eſpouſe. Truth is beſt ſought, and eaſieſt found in the *Scriptures themſelves*; here therefore you ſhould ſeek for it, yet ſo as not to neglect any aſſiſtance that offers towards your advancement in this ſort of knowledge,

ledge, which is the method you take in the other parts of learning, ſtill reſerving a right of judging for yourſelf upon the whole. Give your attendance to reading, meditate on theſe things, give yourſelf in a manner wholly to them; and, as the reward of your thus diligently ſearching the *Scriptures* with a pure, an upright, and a humble mind, you may reaſonably expect to ſucceed better, and to have greater degrees of the divine acceptance and illumination, than in any other method. Honeſt men that think for themſelves, will value you the more for doing what they themſelves have done, though the conſequence ſhould be your differing from them in ſome opinions; and as for the cenſures of others, who want honeſty, or whoſe notions are not properly their own, but their party's from whom they have taken them, they are not worth regarding.

Beſides more *direct evidence*, truth hath very often the advantage of ſome *marks* by which it is characteriſed and diſtinguiſhed from falſhood. *Errors* are apt to claſh, and contradict one another, but there is a conſtant harmony in truth; and therefore the more connected the ſeveral parts of your ſcheme are, and the more ſupport they lend one to the other, and derive from thoſe general principles which are common to every ſyſtem, ſo much the better. Where there is a manifeſt inconſiſtency between the

the principles of Religion univerſally acknowledged amongſt Chriſtians, and ſome other notions which men endeavour to faſten on to them, ſo that they cohere no better than the iron and clay in the feet of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s viſionary image, or rather deſtroy one another, like *fire* and *water* (and it were eaſy to name ſome doctrines in which this happens *) you may be ſure of the

* That God is a Being of the moſt perfect rectitude of nature, *infinitely holy, one that loveth righteouſneſs and hateth iniquity*, is a principle acknowledged by all Chriſtians; and yet even among Chriſtians there are thoſe who hold every man's character and actions, good or bad, to be originally owing to the *abſolute decree* of God; ſo that whatever cauſes the evil action *immediately* flows from, the *will of God* is the *firſt* and *ſupreme* cauſe, in obedience to which all other cauſes neceſſarily produce the effects they do, and cannot poſſibly produce any other: the conſiſtency of which two, *viz.* God's *hatred of ſin*, with his *decreeing* or *willing* its exiſtence, they that can ſhew, are humbly deſired to do it.——The ſame perſons profeſs to believe, agreeably to the general ſenſe of mankind, and the conſtant language of *Scripture*, that God is *juſt*, and *good*, and *gracious*, in the higheſt degree of perfection; notwithſtanding which, they ſuppoſe the *firſt man*'s diſobedience to affect his poſterity in ſuch a manner, by *imputation* or *propagation*, that they are *all deſerving of* eternal miſery, and *much the greater part* of them *actually ſuffer* it, as the unavoidable conſequence of an action which they could not help. Is there no contradiction, I do not ſay to *infinite goodneſs*, or to *any goodneſs*, but to *juſtice*, in this proceeding? Surely, he muſt wink hard that does not ſee it. It is a dictate of univerſal Reaſon, that *God is true*, and not denied by thoſe very men, who,

the falſity of all ſuch notions; notwithſtanding the unnatural alliance in vain attempted between them and the moſt ſacred truths.

Another mark of *truth* in Religion is, the good influence it hath upon *holineſs*, or a right temper of mind, and all the duties and virtues of a chriſtian life. *Practical* truth grows out of *ſpeculative*; at leaſt, can no

who, at the ſame time give ſuch a ſenſe to the moſt ſolemn, the moſt expreſs, the moſt numerous, and moſt unlimited exhortations, declarations, invitations, entreaties and promiſes of the word of God, as makes them ſignify nothing at all, or, what is worſe than nothing to the major part of the chriſtian world, ſerving only to delude them with falſe hopes now, and to aggravate their condemnation at laſt.——Either this is repreſenting God as acting inconſiſtently with ſincerity and veracity; or ſincerity and diſſimulation, veracity and unfaithfulneſs are the ſame things.——While, *in words*, all men own the truth of this propoſition, that *God is no reſpecter of perſons*, ratified by the conſenting voice of *Reaſon* and *Revelation*, how many *really*, or in *effect*, deny it, by teaching that, in the diſtribution of final recompences, the foundation of God's different preceeding with the children of men, is not their having acted or not acted according to their different abilities, and improved or not improved the talents committed to them; but their being of a certain number arbitrarily ordained to eternal life, or the contrary? Upon the whole, the peculiar principles of this odd ſcheme of doctrine are evidently repugnant to the firſt principles of natural and revealed Religion profeſſedly embraced by all Chriſtians, and therefore muſt needs be falſe; and thoſe places of Scripture that ſeem to favour them ought to be taken in another and milder ſenſe, of which they are eaſily capable, and which indeed they require, according to all the rules of juſt and fair conſtruction.

more be hurted by it than one ſpeculative truth can be contrary to, and diſproved by another. This is that *ſound doctrine* of which the Apoſtle *Paul* ſo often ſpeaks in his Epiſtles to *Timothy* and *Titus*; as any one may ſoon convince himſelf that will but conſult the places, particularly 1 *Tim.* i. 10. *Tit.* ii. 1, and following verſes. What promotes the morals of the Goſpel, and, among theſe, *relative virtues*, tending to ſhew the neceſſity, the advantages, and the lovelineſs of them, is ſound doctrine; whatever, in its *natural conſequence*, vacates the obligations to a holy life, and diſcourages the practice of virtue in the whole, or in any particular branches of it, is contrary to ſound doctrine, and can never make a part of the Chriſtian Revelation, which is a doctrine according to godlineſs *.

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* The ſcheme mentioned in the marginal note juſt before will, upon trial, be found to ſtand this teſt (*viz.* of the natural tendency of doctrines to promote or hinder a good life) no better than it did the former. Whatever principles deſtroy the very *notion* of moral good and evil, *i. e.* of virtue and vice, holineſs and ſin, and all *diſtinction* between them, have a plain tendency to baniſh virtue or holineſs *itſelf* from the earth; for, if once a man believes that all actions are alike indifferent, as to any moral good or evil that is in them, any praiſe or blame they deſerve, there can be no room for *conſcience*, which always ſuppoſes an intrinſick immutable difference in actions, and applauds or reproaches men according as they obſerve or neglect this difference in the conduct of their lives. But are the principles before-mentioned thus ſubverſive of the moral differences of actions? Moſt certainly. Were there

Among other fruits of ſound doctrine, there is one that deſerves to be more particularly taken notice of, and that is *love*, the nobleſt paſſion of the human ſoul, and higheſt perfection

there any thing morally and unchangeably good, it muſt be a rule of action to God himſelf; whereas, according to the notion advanced by ſome men of the *divine Sovereignty*, the ſupreme Being conducts all his proceedings by mere arbitrary will and pleaſure. *Again*, if all things (*actions* as well as *events*) are in purſuance of abſolute decrees, it is certain that men are not *free agents*; and if men are not *free*, ſo as to have a *power* to do good or evil, they cannot be *obliged* to do the one, and to forbear the other; nor can any thing they do be properly good or evil, in a *moral ſenſe*, being the pure effect of neceſſity.—The ſame principles enervate all the *motives to holineſs* from the *perfections* of God, his *goodneſs* manifeſted in *Creation*, and in the courſe of his *Providence*, his *unſpeakable love* in giving his *only-begotten Son*, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life; the *death of Chriſt*, and his *love in dying* for us; in a word, from the *promiſes* and *threatenings* of the Goſpel. God, as repreſented by ſome, would not be a proper object of our imitation, having no moral perfections for us to imitate; or, which is much the ſame, we having no ideas of theſe perfections of holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs and truth, *as in God*, and no other way to gueſs at them but by the *effects*, which, if ſuch as are deſcribed by theſe men, would make it the moſt unſafe and deceitful rule in the world, to act in imitation of the Deity. The goodneſs of Creation and Providence would quite vaniſh, as to the *non-elect*, when ſet over-againſt the miſeries of an everlaſting ſtate, to which it was deſigned to be introductory, and does inevitably lead them: no *benefit* being intended to the *non-elect* by the *mediation of Chriſt*, they could be under no *obligation* for it. And as to the *promiſes* and *threatenings* of the Goſpel, the *non-elect* having no concern with the former, nor the *elect* with

fection both of Morality and Religion. Nothing can inſpire a *rational love of the Deity*, but *truth*, becauſe nothing elſe can repreſent him as truly amiable. Juſt notions of God do this; while others, inſtead of cheriſhing that love of God which caſteth out fear, and fills the reaſonable mind with the moſt tranſporting pleaſure in the contemplation of his perfections and works, are, in their own nature, good for nothing elſe but to beget ſuperſtition in ſome, pride and uncharitableneſs in others, a ſecret diſguſt, or endleſs doubts and perplexities in others, according to the different tempers of mens minds.—And there is the ſame difference in reſpect of *mutual benevolence*, or love to our fellow-creatures, on which ſome principles have the moſt friendly, others the moſt malignant aſpect; ſome ſoften and enlarge the heart, others harden and contract it; ſome produce a ſtrong and univerſal *at-*

the latter, one of them would be without *hope*, the other without *fear*, one of them *deſperate*, the other *ſecure*, according to mens believing themſelves to be in one or the other claſs. And ſhould it be ſuggeſted, that the decree is unknown to them; the anſwer is eaſy, that they know thus much, that whatever it be, it will certainly take place in its proper time, any thing they do, or can do, notwithſtanding. The conſequence of all which is, that the reſtraints from evil, and all motives to that which is good, being removed, men, following theſe principles, would give a looſe to their paſſions, and be much worſe than they now are. Whereas, did they act up to the contrary doctrines, man would bear a very great reſemblance to God, and earth to heaven.

attraction among ſouls, others change the attractive into a repelling quality. The former notions are certainly true, the latter as undoubtedly falſe *.

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* Such are the notions which have been tried by the two former marks; they are inconſiſtent with the moſt evident dictates of Reaſon, and deſtructive of ſound Morals. I now add, fatal above all, to *love*. Is the belief of God's having appointed one man to ſalvation, another to damnation, without any reaſon for it in the perſons themſelves, only becauſe he will do it, a proper foundation to be laid for *the love of God*, whether we take that word as ſignifying a delightful veneration of God's perfections, or grateful ſenſe of his goodneſs to us? No, certainly; not even on ſuppoſition I am fully perſuaded of my being in the number of the choſen few. Since, if I rightly conſider it, I can never approve a conduct in the greateſt of beings, and in the higheſt inſtances, the loweſt degrees of which I ſhould abhor and condemn in any other. The greater the Being, and the more extenſive and terrible the doſolation made by his arbitrary decrees, the more diſpleaſing, inſtead of lovely and venerable, muſt his character appear. And as to his benefits, how great ſoever, being conferred, not from any delight he takes in my happineſs, but with the very ſame deſign as he makes others miſerable, that is, purely to ſhew his irreſiſtible power, they cannot inſpire love: much leſs ſhall I be diſpoſed to love God, if under an uncertainty of my election; and leaſt of all can I be obliged to love God, or capable of doing it, if I think myſelf reprobated by him. By the way, this ſhews the difficulty, if not impoſſibility of proving our election upon rational grounds, according to theſe principles. I have no good reaſon to conclude myſelf elected of God, unleſs I love him; and I cannot love him except I firſt believe myſelf elected, *i. e.* according to this ſcheme, not to be arbitrarily rejected by him.——As for the love of our neighbour, what ſupport can that receive from theſe ill-natured principles?

The next care to that of teaching the truth, and nothing elſe, ought to be, to inſiſt moſt frequently and moſt earneſtly on thoſe truths that are moſt *neceſſary*, moſt *uſeful*, moſt *ſeaſonable*. *Neceſſary* as eſſential, or at leaſt very important points of the Chriſtian Revelation, without which the general doctrine of the redemption of the world by Jeſus Chriſt, and the wiſdom of God in the Goſpel-conſtitution, cannot ſo well be apprehended: *Uſeful*, for enlightning the mind, informing the conſcience, purifying the heart, regulating the paſſions, and directing the courſe of the life; and *ſeaſonable*, by being adapted to the neceſſities, the characters, and the circumſtances of hearers.

And that the truth may loſe nothing by the *manner* of communicating it, you muſt be ſenſible that way ought to be choſen in which it is conveyed with the greateſt *clearneſs* to the *conceptions* of men, the moſt convincing *evidence* to their *judgments*, and the moſt forcible and

Will not thoſe, whoſe *inclinations* agree too well with their principles, think themſelves juſtified to hate whom they believe God to hate, and be apt to make a ſort of merit of conforming their wills and their conduct to his? ——On the contrary, when we believe the mercies of God to be over all his works, and his intention to ſave all who, by their obſtinate continuance in ſin, do not exclude themſelves from the common ſalvation, the thoughts of ſuch a glorious deſign naturally dilate the heart in love to God and man, and place all men in the moſt amiable point of view, as good, or capable of being ſo, and our companions in bliſs for ever.

and winning *addreſs* to their *affections*; to the intent they may at once diſcern the truth, receive it in the love thereof, and be ingaged to reſolve and act agreeably to it. When your own thoughts of things are juſt and diſtinct, and your words and expreſſions, which are the dreſs of the thoughts, like a tranſparent veil, do not hide your meaning, but let it be plainly ſeen through; when you neither treat your ſubjects in ſuch a cold dry argumentative way as if you were talking of things of no importance to yourſelf or hearers, and the truth had no charms but for the underſtanding; nor yet raiſe the affections without laying an anſwerable foundation in the judgment to ſupport them, but endeavour to have a proper mixture of ſtrength and ſweetneſs of light and warmth in your diſcourſes; it is then you are likely to do moſt ſervice to truth, and to the ſouls of men. Reaſon and argument there muſt be, or we do not deal with mankind as reaſonable beings: but Reaſon itſelf dictates that there ought to be ſomething beſides, becauſe *human nature* is not made up entirely of *Reaſon*, but of *Reaſon* and *Affection*.

Some other things might be named, to which you ſhould, and I hope will take heed; ſuch as performing all the parts of publick worſhip in a decent and edifying manner, agreeable to the *Scripture rule*, and the nature of *Goſpel inſtitutions*: privately converſing with, adviſing, admoniſhing, and comforting your

flock, as there is occaſion; conſtantly in your ſecret devotions, and making them ſubſervient and preparatory to your publick work. But I ſhall content myſelf to have juſt mentioned theſe things, not only becauſe the Apoſtle ſaith nothing of them in this place, but alſo and chiefly becauſe of their viſible dependance upon what hath been before ſaid; it being impoſſible that a pious Miniſter, who hath a due concern for his own and the ſalvation of his hearers, and labours to conform his faith as well as his life to the *holy Scriptures*, ſhould be careleſs and indifferent about his publick miniſtrations, or any thing elſe that may forward or prejudice his principal deſign.

I have very little time left to conſider the ſucceſs promiſed to the ſteady obſervation of the method here laid down. *Take heed to thyſelf, and to thy doctrine, continue in them*; for *in ſo doing thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf, and them that hear thee.* The ſaving yourſelf and others is ſuppoſed to be the *great end* you have in view (as was ſaid before) and it ſeems in this way you have the greateſt probability of attaining what you aim at; for though men of very indifferent lives may ſometimes be inſtrumental in ſaving others by the goodneſs of their doctrine, and ſome who hold pernicious doctrines may do much by the goodneſs of their lives, and the influence of thoſe truths which are mingled with their er-

rors *, yet it may juſtly be expected, that the greateſt execution will be done, where both theſe, a good converſation and good doctrine, are found united. Not that the effect, after all, will follow, as to the ſalvation of others, without their concurrence, in which they are free; but becauſe, having taken the courſe now mentioned, you have diſcharged your duty, which is all that you are anſwerable for, ſo as to have rejoicing in yourſelf, and a humble aſſurance that your reward is with God, and have uſed the moſt probable means of bringing your hearers to concur with you; ſince *truth* and *goodneſs* are the beſt engines we can imploy in laying ſiege to the hearts of men:

* It was promiſed by our Saviour to his firſt diſciples, that if *they drank any deadly thing it ſhould not hurt them.* We may ſay ſomething like this of the pernicious doctrines embraced by ſome good men. They embrace them, and yet are not hurt by them; nay, and notwithſtanding them, are, it may be, uſeful to others, among whom they at once propagate their *virtues* and their *miſtakes.* But then, as in the former caſe, what the diſciples drank was nevertheleſs *deadly* in its own nature, becauſe the operation of it was prevented by *miracle*; ſo here, mens eſcaping an hurt themſelves, and being the inſtrument of good to others, is no argument of the *innocence*, much leſs the *uſefulneſs*, of their notions. They may be exceeding pernicious in themſelves for all that; only, an honeſt heart, and the virtue of ſome excellent truths, like a vigorous antidote, happily counter-act them. A noble medicine may cure, notwithſtanding ſome improper ingredients mixed up with it; yet ſtill we ſhould be very much miſtaken to attribute the good effect of the medicine to theſe ingredients, which, at beſt, help nothing towards it, perhaps, very much diminiſh it.

men: nor as if, where the effect does follow, we were to aſcribe the glory of it to *men*, but to *God*, by whoſe *Word* and *Spirit* it is brought about. The neceſſity of the divine aſſiſtance, or co-operation, is one of thoſe things which they that take heed to their doctrine will not fail to teach and inculcate; but then as this aſſiſtance is *neceſſary*, ſo it may be *depended on* by all thoſe, whether Miniſters or private Chriſtians, who ſincerely pray for it, and faithfully improve it, though they are not without their imperfections.

Upon the whole. What an excellent work is it you are ingaged in! And what a glorious proſpect lies before you! Enough to put life and ſpirit into your endeavours, and to render *labour* itſelf a *pleaſure*. That God may guide, aſſiſt, comfort, and proſper you in the future courſe of your miniſtry, is my heart's deſire and prayer to God for you; to which, I doubt not, all this numerous aſſembly of Chriſtians will ſay, *Amen.*

QUE-

QUERIES

Propoſed to the

CONSIDERATION

Of all ſuch as think it

An INJURY to RELIGION

To ſhew the

Reaſonableneſs of it.

In malice be ye children, but in underſtanding be men. 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

1732.

TO THE

READER.

THE offence taken at a paſſage or two in an Ordination Sermon *, *being that which gave riſe to the following* Queries, *it is hoped the* Reader *will not be diſpleaſed to have the obnoxious paſſages laid before him; eſpecially when ſome of the* Queries *cannot be ſo fully underſtood without them.*

' *We ſhould take all opportunities of ſhew-*
' *ing them [our hearers] the excellency of*
' *the doctrines and precepts of our holy*
' *Religion, (which, by the way, makes a part*
' *of the proof of its truth;) and obſerving to*
' *them how admirably they all conſpire in one*
' *great end, the glory of God, and the perfec-*
' *tion and happineſs of man. It ſhould be our*
' *endeavour to convince them of the reaſonable-*
' *neſs of thoſe duties that are required of them,*
' *and the goodneſs of God in requiring them.—*
' *It became Chriſt, as a* Lawgiver, *to teach*
' *with*

* For the Rev. Mr. *Amory*, and the Rev. Mr. *Corniſh*. Vol. I. p. 467.

'*with authority*; *leting men know what God* '*required of them, and what they, according* '*to their behaviour, might expect from God*; '*without entering into the* particular rea- 'ſons *of his commands, and proving the di-* '*vine original of his doctrine from a* diſtinct 'conſideration *of its nature and tendency, tho'* '*he himſelf hints at this. And much the ſame* '*method is taken in thoſe ſacred Writings by* '*which the Chriſtian Revelation is conveyed* '*down to us. The doctrine they contain is* '*perfectly* reaſonable, *but there is very little* 'reaſoning *upon it. This part is left to thoſe* '*who are only the* Expounders *of the Scripture* '*Revelation, and who owe it to the Author of* '*their Faith, to the Faith itſelf, and to them* '*that believe, to trace and mark out thoſe foot-* '*ſteps of the divine holineſs, wiſdom, and good-* '*neſs, that are ſo conſpicuous in the frame of* '*our Religion.*'——*And further on in the Sermon* ——' *If it be granted that there* '*is a real ſanctifying virtue in the Goſpel, un-* '*der the influences of the holy Spirit, this vir-* '*tue muſt proceed from a fitneſs in the doctrines* '*and precepts of the Goſpel, to beget in us the* 'love *of God*; *and of thoſe qualities and ac-* '*tions that will render us like God: which* 'love *muſt be the effect of a conviction, that* '*the things which the Goſpel aſcribes to God are* '*adorable perfections, and requires of man,* '*in order to his reſembling of God, are, in their* '*own* nature, *lovely and excellent. Even the*

'pro-

'promiſes *and* threatnings *of the Goſpel, do*
'*not perhaps ſo* directly *influence the conver-*
'*ſion of the* heart *to God, and our endeavours*
'*after holineſs; but rather,* indirectly, *as they*
'*work upon our paſſions, and thereby ingage us*
'*to conſider more ſeriouſly and attentively than*
'*we ſhould otherwiſe do, the reaſonableneſs of*
'*Religion; the intrinſick value and native beauty*
'*of holineſs, and great excellence of all thoſe*
'*divine and ſpiritual attainments which Chriſti-*
'*anity obliges us to aſpire after.*'

The Reader will judge whether there be any thing ſo criminal, or doubtful, in theſe paſſages, as to call for an apology or explanation.

The Author of the Queries *is ſenſible he could have reduced them to a ſmaller number; but he conſidered that they were likely to be of more uſe to the generality of readers in the preſent form, in which the thoughts are drawn out, and placed in different lights, than they would have been, had the thoughts been crouded into a very narrow compaſs, and rather* implied *than* expreſſed.

He hath one more favour to beg, and that is, that having, in reading a Reformation-Sermon *by Dr.* Wiſhart, *lately publiſhed, among many other things excellently obſerved by that judicious Divine, been particularly ſtruck with the repreſentation there made, of the miſchiefs attending the neglect of a rational and virtuous Education, he may be pardoned the liberty he hath*

hath taken to tranſcribe a part of it, being ſo agreeable to his own ſentiments and deſign.—'*I* '*ſpeak it with very great concern; I cannot* '*help being apprehenſive that the looſeneſs and* '*debauchery ſo much lamented in many, who are* '*obſerved to have had a religious Education,* '*may often be found to proceed, in a great mea-* '*ſure, from that very Education itſelf, as it is* '*managed: for I may appeal to attentive ob-* '*ſervers, whether that which obtains the name* '*of a* religious *Education, does not often turn* '*out in ſuch a ſhape as this? The care of Pa-* '*rents or Inſtructors, about the religious part* '*of Education, is almoſt wholly ſpent in incul-* '*cating upon young ones the* Shibboleth *of a* '*Party; making them acquainted with, and* '*inſtilling into them a regard for the particu-* '*lar doctrines, or peculiar forms of their own* '*ſect; in which there may oft-times be found a* '*mixture of things abſurd or trifling; which* '*yet are inculcated with as great earneſtneſs,* '*and by the ſame methods, with the moſt weighty* '*and important points;—and inſtead of form-* '*ing their minds to a* rational *ſenſe of good and* '*evil, a taſte and reliſh for true piety and vir-* '*tue, upon ſuch principles as will ſtand the teſt* '*of a moſt ſtrict examination; any inſtances of* '*good practice they are taught, are recom-* '*mended and enforced by mere authority, or by* '*the awe of future rewards and puniſhments;* '*which, as they are made uſe of, without ever* '*explaining the nature and juſtice of them, can*

'*con-*

'*contribute no more to promote a liberal piety*
'*and virtue, a reliſh for true goodneſs, and*
'*ſavour of honeſty in the mind, than whips*
'*and ſugar-plumbs: while, in all the offices of*
'*Religion to which they are accuſtomed, they*
'*are detained before the Lord againſt their*
'*will; forced to run the round of certain*
'*forms they know no good in; no care being taken*
'*to inſtill into them a juſt ſenſe of true piety and*
'*devotion, or a regard to any valuable purpoſe*
'*in ſuch obſervances, ſave only the pleaſing of*
'*their Parents; whoſe devotion and piety at the*
'*ſame time they obſerve to be exerted in ſuch*
'*a way, as tends to give them no amiable and*
'*inviting, but rather a diſguſting and for-*
'*biding view of it.* —*Is this to* train up a
'Child in the way that he ſhould go?——
'*When a creature (thus neglected ſhall I ſay,*
'*or rather) with great care miſguided, comes*
'*to be emancipated from ſuch fetters, and get*
'*rid of ſuch aukward reſtraints; when the raw*
'*unformed Youth comes once (as perhaps with*
'*a ſcanty portion of underſtanding, and very*
'*ſlender exerciſe of Reaſon he may) to diſcover a*
'*flaw or weakneſs in ſome things, that, it may*
'*be, he hath been taught to look upon as equally*
'*ſacred with God and virtue, goodneſs and ho-*
'*neſty, muſt it not be natural for him, upon*
'*ſuch a diſcovery, with the concurrence of wild*
'*paſſions, uſed to no regular government, to draw*
'*very general and haſty concluſions, and to*
'*throw up at once every thing he hath been for-*

'merly taught, and which his Education hath 'furnished him with nothing to say for, more 'than for some things he hath now found to be 'trifling and absurd?'

Here may it not be justly made a Query,' *Whether Parents and Instructors were not first led into this error, in the Education of Children, by Divines? And, whether therefore these latter, as they led them in, are not concerned to do their endeavour to lead them out of it again?*

QUERIES

QUERIES

Propoſed to the

CONSIDERATION *&c.*

QUERY I.

IS not *Reaſon* that faculty of the mind by which we perceive the truth or falſhood of Propoſitions (as well as their meaning) that is, indeed, the evidence of their truth or falſhood? Even ſhewing the *reaſonableneſs* of things, what is it elſe but ſhewing the *truth* of ſome Propoſition relating to their reaſonableneſs? As he that *proves* or *ſees* the reaſonableneſs of *gratitude*, does, in effect, prove or ſee the *truth* of this Propoſition, that *gratitude is a reaſonable thing.* Is not this a right notion of *Reaſon?* And is there any thing of *carnality* in *Reaſon* thus explained? Is not *carnal Reaſon*, in this ſenſe of the word, a contradiction in terms? There

being, in fact, no worſe foes to Reaſon, or greater hinderances and obſtructions in reaſoning, eſpecially concerning matters of Religion, than thoſe which the *Scripture* calls the *luſts* and the *works* of the fleſh.

QUERY II.

Is not *Reaſon* a gift of God with which we ought, in the beſt manner we can, to glorify the giver? And do we not then glorify God with our Reaſon, when we trace and mark out thoſe footſteps of the divine wiſdom, holineſs, and goodneſs, which are ſo conſpicuous in the frame of our Religion? *Wiſdom is juſtified of her children*; how, but by their having right apprehenſions themſelves of the wiſdom of God in his *Diſpenſations* and *Laws*, and becoming advocates for them to others? And in what way can this be done without *reaſoning?*

QUERY III.

Is not *Reaſon* one way of God's ſpeaking to men, as *Revelation* is another? If ſo; after God hath ſpoken to us by *Revelation*, are we no longer to attend to him, as he ſpeaks to us, and inſtructs us, by our *Reaſon?* Why? If he does not ſpeak *contrary* things; which cannot be affirmed without blaſphemy.

QUERY IV.

Is it not our duty to honour God as our Creator and Governor? And of this are we not more capable, when we obſerve that the *Nature* and the *Laws* which he hath given us, are more exactly adapted to each other, ſo as to produce an immediate connection between our duty and our happineſs? And what elſe is this but *reaſoning in Religion?*

QUERY V.

In reſpect of all the *Moral Precepts* of the Goſpel, is not the Will of God founded in the *Reaſon of things?* In other words; is not the reaſonableneſs of ſome actions, and the unreaſonableneſs of ſome others, one ground, at leaſt, of God's commanding *thoſe* and forbidding *theſe?* And may we not allowably make that a reaſon for our doing a thing which is God's reaſon for commanding it?

QUERY VI.

Does not what we call the *excellency* of the *Chriſtian Religion* depend, in a great meaſure, on the *reaſonableneſs* of it? And is not that man then the beſt judge of its excellence (*cæteris paribus*) who moſt clearly diſcerns its reaſonableneſs? And, this being granted, does he not do good ſervice to Religion by ſhewing it to be reaſonable?

QUERY VII.

Are *miracles* alone as ſtrong a proof of the truth of *Chriſtianity*, as miracles in conjunction with the *Nature* of its *Doctrines* and *Precepts?* If not, how is this proof from the Doctrines and Precepts to be managed, without entering, more or leſs, into the conſideration of the reaſonableneſs of the Precepts; the uſefulneſs of the Doctrines to enforce them, together with their agreeableneſs to, or, at leaſt, their conſiſtency with, the principles of right Reaſon? Or, laying aſide all *external evidence* from miracles, as well as *intrinſick* from the Doctrine, are we to truſt *entirely* to the inward *teſtimony of the Spirit?* They that aſſert this, will do well to explain what they mean by the *teſtimony of the Spirit*, and to reflect on the dangerous conſequences of their notion.

QUERY VIII.

Is there not an *order* in duties? And are there not *degrees* in the guilt of ſins? How is this to be diſcovered and fixed, but by *Reaſon?*

QUERY IX.

Are not the love of God and our neighbour, and living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly,

godly, the ſum and ſubſtance of *practical Religion?* And are not a great many good reaſons to be given for all theſe, from the nature of the duties themſelves? And when ſuch reaſons can be given, ought they not to be given? Is it not for the *glory of God* they ſhould?

QUERY X.

Is not the *Chriſtian Religion* a more perfect Diſpenſation than the *Law of Moſes*, conſider'd as a *reaſonable Service?* But if we make the *mere* Will of God the *entire Ratio* of both, wherein will the mighty difference appear between them? Or, how is the *Goſpel* the *good*, and *perfect*, and *acceptable* Will of God, any more than the *Law?*

QUERY XI.

Were a Miniſter to preach on the following *Texts*, and a great many others like them, could he do it to any good purpoſe, without *Reaſoning? In keeping of them* (the Commandments of God) *there is great reward. Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. He that ſineth againſt me wrongeth his own ſoul. My yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light. Prove all things, hold faſt that which is good. And as he reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come,* Felix *trembled. Whatſoever things are true, ve-*

nerable, juſt, pure, lovely, of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praiſe, think of thoſe things.

QUERY XII.

Is a man's acting out of regard to the *Reaſon of the thing*, inconſiſtent with his having a proper reſpect to the *Will and Authority of God?* On the contrary, the greater the neceſſity and importance of a thing is by Reaſon diſcovered to be, is not that thing more *apparently* the Will of God? This being ſuppoſed; who conforms moſt exactly to the Will of God, and is moſt likely to be vigorous and ſteady in the practice of his duty, *he* that acts with a view to the ſeveral reaſons and motives of action that are of weight, doing what God wills, becauſe he wills it, and for the ſame reaſons that he wills it, as far as they appear; or *he* that only conſiders the thing as commanded? Will not this latter be more apt, under a ſtrong temptation, to queſtion, whether he hath not miſtaken the meaning of the command; or whether the command may not be diſpenſed with, never having conſidered the *morality* of it, and the *unchangeable nature of moral good and evil?*

QUERY XIII.

Was it poſſible that the *Chriſtian Church* ſhould have been overſpread ſo early with the groſſeſt

groſſeſt corruptions in Doctrine and Worſhip, if men had made a right uſe of their *Bibles* and *Reaſon*, and *judged for themſelves*, not *blindly* following their *blind* Guides? Or could they believe and hold faſt the plaineſt inconſiſtences, which hath been formerly done, and is ſo ſtill, if Reaſon were not diſcarded; which would convince them that Propoſitions *true* and *falſe* about the *ſame thing*, the *beſt* of principles with ſome of the *worſt*, were not fit company to lodge together in the ſame head? St. *Auſtin*, when a *Manichee*, was a believer of two oppoſite and coeternal principles of things, the one *good*, the other *evil*: afterwards, when a *Catholick*, he aſſerted the unity of the firſt principle; but by repreſenting every thing that is done as the accompliſhment of an abſolute decree, he did, in effect, teach that the ſovereignly good Being was the uncontroulable author both of good and evil. And muſt not a man ſilence his Reaſon, before he can entertain ſuch an inconſiſtent notion, that the *fountain of living waters* does at once ſend forth *ſweet* water and *bitter*?

QUERY XIV.

Is there not a *fitneſs* in the *Doctrines* and *Precepts* of the Goſpel to beget in us the love of God, and of thoſe qualities and actions which will render us like God? And does not their

their fitneſs, as *means* to this *end*, ariſe from their apparent *goodneſs* and *reaſonableneſs?* As to the *promiſes* and *threatenings* of the Goſpel, do they not conſpire to the ſame end, by working on our paſſions, our hopes and fears, and thereby ingaging us to conſider more ſeriouſly and attentively than we ſhould otherwiſe do, the reaſonableneſs of Religion, the obligation we are under from all the principles of gratitude and ingenuity to ſerve God, whoſe ſervice is the moſt perfect freedom; the intrinſick value, and native beauty of holineſs, and great excellence of all thoſe divine and ſpiritual attainments which Chriſtianity obliges us to aſpire after? *&c.* So that the efficacy of Goſpel-promiſes and threatenings in kindling the love of God in the ſoul, and of thoſe actions and diſpoſitions in which the image of God conſiſts, (which by the way is true vital Religion) is not exerted *ſo much* in a *direct* and *immediate* manner, as indirectly and more remotely, by being the occaſion of our conſidering and diſcerning the *lovelineſs* of theſe things. Take, for an example, thoſe two places of Scripture, *Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God. Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* As far as ſuch paſſages influence men in a *moral way*, not only determining their *reſolutions* to deny themſelves ſinful gratifications, and to lead a ſober, righteous, and godly life, but actually poſſeſſing them with a *reliſh* and *appro-*

approbation of that which is good; how do they produce this effect if not *chiefly* as *motives* by which men are perſuaded to conſider the nature and neceſſity of this qualification, and the happineſs reſulting from the free intercourſe of a holy ſoul with a holy God; the *conſideration* of which being joined with their own *experience* in the courſe of a good life, works in them a deep *conviction* of the reaſonableneſs of Religion, as this conviction tends to bring them heartily in love with it? Without this, how can the Chriſtian properly *delight in God*, or have any tolerable notion of the bleſſedneſs of injoying him? The ſame thing is much more evident of ſome other threatenings; for what *direct* efficacy hath the threatening of eternal wrath and deſtruction to inſpire men with the love of God, and of goodneſs, and with the hatred of ſin *as* ſin?

QUERY XV.

In whatever ſtate we conſider men, whether in that before *converſion* or after, is it of no uſe to ſet before them the *reaſonableneſs* of thoſe duties that are required of them, and the *goodneſs* of God in requiring them? May not thoſe who are ingaged in a vicious courſe of life, eſpecially perſons of ſome tempers, be *firſt* awakened by ſuch *rational* conſiderations, which apply to their underſtandings and ingenuity, dating the *occaſion* and *beginnings* of tneir

their converſion to God from thence; or at leaſt of ſuch a degree of reformation and amendment as brings them nearer the *kingdom of heaven* than they were before, and renders them much more uſeful members of ſociety? And may not the *progreſs* of others who are entered upon a holy life, and the pleaſure they have in the practice of piety, the adherence of their hearts to God, the elevation of their affections, and livelineſs of their devotions, be greatly prompted by the ſame means? They who deny this, are deſired to ſhew why, when the Spirit of God does not, we may ſay *cannot*, work Grace where there is not the *faculty* of Reaſon; the free *exerciſe* of that faculty ſhould *hinder* rather than *invite* his operations, and conſpire to render them more ſucceſful?

QUERY XVI.

Did not *Chriſt* teach as a *Lawgiver*; and his Apoſtles as perſons inſpired? But for the *ordinary Miniſters* of the Goſpel, what are they elſe than *Expounders* of the Chriſtian Revelation; above mere *Readers*, and below *men inſpired?* Now the queſtion is, whether the lawgiver and the inſpired perſon do not act agreeably to their character, though they ſhould require obedience, without aſſigning any other reaſon for it beſides the authority which the command is built on, or the promiſes and threatenings by which it is enforced?

Was

Was it not after this manner the *Decalogue* was delivered from mount *Sinai*, and the other laws were recorded by *Moſes?* Notwithſtanding which, is it not allowable for them whoſe buſineſs it is to expound the Scripture, yea, and their duty too, according to the beſt of their capacity, to unfold the meaning of the *ſacred Text*, and by Reaſon and Argument to vindicate every part of it from the objections raiſed againſt it by *pride*, *ignorance*, and ſinful *prejudices?* Could they who ſate in *Moſes*'s *Seat* have given the *Rationale* of the Law, aſſigning the ground and occaſion of every particular precept, ought they not to have done it, in order to demonſtrate, with the greateſt evidence, that *no one nation had ſtatutes and judgments ſo righteous as all that Law which* Moſes in the name of *God ſet before the people of* Iſrael? As this, with regard to the Laws and Inſtitutions of Chriſt may be more eaſily done, is it any mark of reſpect to Chriſt, *as Lawgiver of the Chriſtian Church*, to neglect it?

QUERY XVII.

If becauſe our Saviour and his Apoſtles, in the ſhort accounts we have of the Doctrine taught by them, propoſed things without *much* or *frequent reaſoning* upon them, the Preachers of the Goſpel muſt not venture to *reaſon* with their hearers, though in the moſt *familiar way*, and in things that are the proper ſub-

ſubjects of *reaſoning*, or muſt do it very ſparingly; may we not argue in like manner, that foraſmuch as we ſeldom meet with any but general commands and prohibitions in the *ſacred Scriptures*, we ought therefore to confine ourſelves to *generals*, and not preſume to bring down general rules to *particular caſes* and *circumſtances?* Why is not their example a rule, from which we are never to depart, in one caſe as well as in the other, ſo that, *for inſtance*, we ought not to *explain* the meaning and extent of that command, *Lye not one to another*, (ſhewing that *equivocations*, *mental reſervations*, and deceiving by *actions*, as well as by *words*, are included under it; which, by the way, too cannot be done without proper *arguments*) any more than to *prove* the *reaſonableneſs* of it, by ſetting forth the evil of the thing forbidden? If he that *reaſons* pretends therein to be wiſer than Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and to have a better way of preaching than they had, does not he do the very ſame who *explains?*

QUERY XVIII.

What a bulk muſt the Writings of the *New Teſtament* have grown to, did they not only preſent us with a *ſhort view* of the Doctrines, Precepts, and Promiſes of the Chriſtian Religion, but contained alſo particular and copious *enlargements* upon each. On the other hand,

hand, without ſuch enlargements, and building on the foundation laid in Scripure, within how ſhort a compaſs will a Miniſter's work, as a *Preacher*, be reduced? How little will he have to ſay upon particular ſubjects, and how hard be put to it to avoid endleſs and tireſome repetitions, ſuppoſing him to continue ſeveral years with the ſame People?

QUERY XIX.

Who expreſs the trueſt regard to the *Scripture* in the manner of their preaching, *they* who make it their aim to keep cloſe to the meaning and intent of the *Holy Ghoſt* in every part of it, eſpecially when any *Point of Doctrine* is to be eſtabliſhed; or *others*, who ſatisfy themſelves with the ſound of words, taking the ſenſe upon truſt, and ſometimes have not even that poor foundation for their diſcoveries, but chuſe a Text for no other, or better reaſon, but that being of the allegorical and figurative kind, it will afford their fancies full ſcope to ramble, and give them an opportunity to prove ſtrange things, which cannot be proved any other way? *e. g.* That men are paſſive in the work of converſion, able to contribute little or nothing more to it than if they were ſo many ſtocks and ſtones, is a notion highly injurious to the honour of our Maker, contradictory to the plaineſt aſſertions of Scripture, and deſtructive of

of every exhortation and motive to a holy life. But now only take for your Text thoſe words of God to the Prophet—*Can theſe bones live? Propheſy over theſe bones, and ſay unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord*— and you carry your point at once. Rare way of evincing the *truth*, which is equally fitted to demonſtrate the greateſt *abſurdities!* Witneſs thoſe lovers of the *marvellous*, and devourers of nonſenſe and contradiction, the *Papiſts*; who in that figurative expreſſion, *This is my Body*, have found the doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* as plainly taught, as ſome good *Proteſtants* have ſeveral articles of their faith in other metaphorical and myſtical places of the *Bible*.

QUERY XX.

Is not the judicious, underſtanding Chriſtian, whoſe piety is ſubſtantial, his charity extenſive, and his zeal according to knowledge, a more amiable character, of greater credit to Religion, and more weight and authority in the world, than another who is ſtiff and poſitive, he hardly knows *why*, or for *what*, and very often in the wrong place; apt to confine Religion to his own party, and childiſhly troubleſome to all about him? Does not *one* as a *Miniſter*, a *Maſter*, a *Parent*, or in any other ſtation and relation of life, take the way to *allure* to a love and eſteem for Religion thoſe

thoſe who are within the ſphere of his influence; the *other*, to *frighten* them from it? And under what ſort of *Preaching* is each of theſe characters moſt likely to ſpring up, and prevail? Were it not much to be wiſhed, that ſome men, in their great zeal for Religion, would argue and reaſon for it more than they do; and not run the hazard of expoſing it to the ridicule of enemies, giving diſguſt to the wiſer part of its friends, and making conceited *enthuſiaſts*, and peeviſh ignorant *bigots* of too many of the reſt?

QUERY XXI.

Ought not ſome conſideration to be had of the prevailing genius and taſte of the *Age* for rational knowledge, and freer inquiries? So that, allowing there have been times when a dogmatical way of aſſerting things without proving them, and raiſing the paſſions of people in a *mechanical*, rather than a *rational* way, anſwered the great ends of Preaching better than any other method would have done (which I am far from believing) yet now that the ſtate of things is very much altered, and great numbers are no longer to be treated as *children*, nor will be contented to have their underſtandings *amazed* and *dazzled*, inſtead of being *enlightened*, Miniſters ought in *prudence* to change their way, as far as they can do it with a *good conſcience*. Would that

method which once did good, now do miſchief; and another method, without doing the ſame hurt, do more good; and ought not *that* to be laid aſide then, and *this* choſen? May not the *rational*, and the *ſerious* and *pathetick ſobriety* and *freedom* of thought, be reconciled and united in our Pulpit-Diſcourſes; and would they not do more execution if they were? Why ſhould we ſcruple differing from a former Age in the method of Preaching any more than in the expreſſion; if, as the change in the language makes the one expedient, ſo different circumſtances do the other? Or, What reaſon have we to think, that the *wiſer part* of our Forefathers would not have had ſome regard to men and things; not by giving up their Religion, but in order to procure it the greater ſucceſs? As it is certain, *theſe* never went at all, or not ſo far, into the puerile and fanciful way of Preaching when it was moſt in faſhion.

QUERY XXII.

Are not ſome men averſe to reaſoning on *religious ſubjects*, from an apprehenſion of the ill conſequence it will be of to their *favourite opinions? Firſt*, You muſt not uſe your Reaſon upon the *Doctrines* of *Chriſtianity*; becauſe thoſe which they teach for ſuch, will not bear that examination; being as oppoſite to all the principles of *Reaſon* and *Scripture* too,

too, as darkneſs is to light; of which kind are *abſolute Decrees*; *God's giving men a Being, but never putting them into a proper capacity of obtaining happineſs, or avoiding miſery; which is to make their Being no favour, but the quite contrary; and conſequently, to take away all obligation to God, and all foundation of guilt: that the Goſpel is afforded to the greater part of thoſe that injoy it, only to render them the more inexcuſable*, &c.— *Next*, You muſt not reaſon upon the *Precepts* of the Goſpel, though they approve themſelves to the Reaſon of all mankind; becauſe ſhould you be allowed to reaſon upon *any part* of Religion, the moſt apparently reaſonable, you might be apt to go further than you ſhould; attempt to prove that cenſoriouſneſs cannot be chriſtian zeal; bitter envyings and ſtrifes, with a narrow, ſelfiſh, or at beſt, party ſpirit, is not that charity which the Goſpel ſo earneſtly recommends; nor a worldly, ſcraping temper, any mark of a man's ſetting his affections upon things above: and from hence might proceed to aſk a reaſon of ſome other things, for which no good reaſon can be given, though placed by too many among the moſt precious truths of the Goſpel. Is it not plain, (according to an old ſaying) that *ſuch men are againſt Reaſon, becauſe* conſcious to themſelves that *Reaſon is againſt them*; if not upon the ſame ac-

count, alſo, as the *Phariſees* oppoſed our Bleſſed Lord, becauſe of the tendency and deſign of his doctrine to take off the people from a ſlaviſh dependence upon their dictates? This is known to be the ground of that great care which the *Romiſh Church* takes, to keep all of her Communion from examining thoſe large and nauſeous doſes which ſhe obliges them to ſwallow. And as far as the ſame ſpirit and practice prevail among *Proteſtants*, they forget, and put off their own character, and act in the borrowed one of *Papiſts*. Whether they do this becauſe they have occaſion for diſguiſe and concealment, like the *Papiſts*, they that are *guilty* ſhould conſider; and all others will eaſily judge. ——The next *Query* ſhall be founded on the Quotation in the Title-Page.

QUERY XXIII.

If repeating after others be the work of *memory* only, in which *children* very often, if not *generally*, excel grown perſons, are thoſe grown perſons to be eſteemed men in underſtanding, of whom the beſt that can be ſaid, is, that they have not forgot the *Catechiſm* which they learned when they were children? Poſſibly, they may be able to bring, what they have been taught to call, *Proofs* of every Point of their Faith or Practice; but as long as they acquieſce in thoſe Proofs, good

or

or bad, as they were delivered to them, as it were *ſealed up*, without all inquiry, reflection, or exerciſe of the leaſt act of their judgment about them, are they Proofs to *them?* Let them deſerve commendation as much as you pleaſe in other reſpects, is it not a melancholy truth, that, after all, they are but *children in underſtanding?* To couclude.

QUERY XXIV.

If becauſe *Reaſon*, or rather a pretence to it, is liable to be abuſed, *Reaſon* therefore muſt be baniſhed from Religion, will not this juſtify the *Papiſts* in laying aſide the *Scriptures* too, which may be, and frequently have been, perverted to the worſt purpoſes? Eſpecially, when forbidding men to reaſon, but allowing them to read the Scriptures is only doing things by halves, and too much like leaving a man in poſſeſſion of a ſword * after you have put out his eyes, which ſhould direct him in the uſe of it.

* *The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* Eph. vi. 17.

A

LETTER

To the REVEREND

Mr. *JOHN BALL*,

Of HONITON, *Devonshire*,

On his late

PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED,

Some Remarks on a new Way *of Preaching*, &c.

1737.

THE

PREFACE.

I Muſt beg the Reader's patience while I make two or three general obſervations *concerning the* Remarks, *not mentioned in the following Letter to the* Author. *The* firſt *is on the* Remarker's *management with regard to the* chief ſubject, *and, I believe I may ſay,* ſole occaſion, *of his great work,* viz. *the* * Ordination Sermon, *and Defence of it, in a ſmall Pamphlet, entitled,* Queries propoſed to the conſideration of all ſuch as think it an injury to Religion to ſhew the Reaſonableneſs of it. *The* Remarks *conſiſt but of* four and twenty *pages. Of theſe the Author ſpends more than* twelve *before he comes to the conſideration of the* Sermon *and* Queries, *which he quits again,* p. 21; *in the few pages between making a* Diverſion *to Dr.* Wiſhart, *whom, ſo impartial is he, he treats with as little ceremony as he does me. And how does he imploy that ſmall* pittance *of*

* For the Rev. Mr. *Amory* and Rev. Mr. *Corniſh.* Vol. I. p. 467.

of his Book which properly relates to the paſſages *excepted againſt in the ſaid* Sermon *and* Queries? *Is it in briefly and fairly ſtating the matter in debate? Anſwering, or giving* hints *of anſwers, to the arguments urged in the* Queries? *Or advancing ſo much as one ſingle argument, deſerving that name, againſt the doctrine in the* Sermon? *Nothing leſs. He* miſtakes, *he* accuſes, *he* rails, *he* exclaims *and* laments; *and that's all. This, indeed, muſt be ſaid for him, that he is a bright example of the* dogmatical *and* mechanical *way of writing, and of that averſion to* Reaſon *in Religion, with which it ſeems to be one principal part of his aim to poſſeſs his Readers.*

Another obſervation *is, that what hath moſt* truth, *and the greateſt ſhew of* argument, *in the* Remarks, *is nothing to the purpoſe; not, in the leaſt, affecting the Author of the* Proofs of a Future State. *The* Remarker *makes a ſhort flouriſh on the* moral proofs *of the immortality of the ſoul, and a life after this. And are not the* moral *arguments moſt largely inſiſted on by the Author of the* Proofs *himſelf? It is true, he lays the foundation in the* natural immortality, *or* ſpirituality, *of the ſoul, as a fair* preſumption *of its being deſigned to continue for ever in* Being, *no* counter probability *appearing on the oppoſite ſide; but not as a* full proof *of it, without taking in the conſideration of the ſuperior excellence of the human ſoul;* Proofs, *Chap.* III. §. 7, 8. *which ſhews the learned*

learned compariſon of the ſetting dog *to be quite impertinet to the preſent caſe. The* Remarker, *likewiſe, harangues upon* ſincerity; *which, he truly obſerves, will not excuſe men, when it ſignifies no more than their acting according to their preſent thoughts. And, where hath the Author of the* Proofs *ſuppoſed that it would? Where hath he given any ſuch maimed and partial idea of* ſincerity? *Hath he not, on the contrary, expreſſed himſelf with all the guard he could have been expected to have done, if he had foreſeen ſuch an attack; pleading for none among the* Heathen *but ſuch as were* honeſt minded, *and had* integrity of heart, did not hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs, *but were* lovers of the things which are good and true, *and* ſincerely deſirous of knowing and doing their duty? *p.* 183, 184. *But though this talk of* ſincerity, *and the* moral Proofs *of a Future State, is nothing to the purpoſe, of confuting any thing ſaid by the* Author of the Proofs, *it may, for ought I know, be to the* Remarker's *purpoſe, which is, too evidently, to give the world as bad a notion as he can of Mr.* G——. *But, in the mean while, I much doubt, were the* Remarker *to be tried by his own notion of* ſincerity, *as including an endeavour to know the truth, he would not very ſoon be able to find a* Jury *of twelve good men and true, to acquit him in* this particular point; *for, as to his* general character, *I am far from calling that in queſtion.*

The

The laſt obſervation *relates to the* time *of* publiſhing *the* Remarks, ſix Years *after the appearance of the Books* * *againſt which they are levelled. This leaves the miſtakes that occur in them, ariſing from* paſſion *and* prejudice, *without excuſe. If they had been drawn up and printed* in haſte, *it might have been pleaded, that the Author had been carried too far by the warmth of his temper, and a zeal for the truth, which he imagined to be injured by Mr.* G——*'s notions. But here was time enough for a greater fire than ſo ſmall a matter ſhould have kindled, to go out, and for the* Remarker *coolly and impartially to examine the* criminal paſſages, *which would have convinced him, that they were* really *very* innocent, *and ſo have prevented this ſhame to himſelf, and impoſition on the zeal of his* credulous Reader. *But here lies the advantage of this* late publication. *The circumſtances in favour of the* Sermon, *as its being approved by the Audience, and publiſhed at the unanimous deſire of a great number of Miniſters then preſent, it is to be hoped, are now forgotten; the* Sermon *itſelf not eaſily to be had, and the minds of a great many people, by the prejudices iuduſtriouſly inſtilled and propagated againſt certain perſons, for a conſiderable time paſt, better fitted to receive any ſuggeſtions of the* Remarker, *without ſuſpicion of their being groundleſs, and to take the impreſſion and ply he is willing to give them. This ſeems to*

* *The* Queries *excepted.*

to be the truth of the caſe, as far as appearances will help us to gueſs at it. But how fair this ſort of dealing is, I leave every candid and inquiring Reader to judge.

N. B. *To make the Reader ſome ſatisfaction for this* perſonal Debate, *of which let the aggreſſor bear the blame; if Mr.* Ball, *or any friend of his, be diſpoſed to enter into a ſober inquiry,* Whether, and how far, the Uſe of Reaſon is to be allowed in Religion, *the Author of the following Letter promiſes, God willing, to give what is offered a fair examination, and either frankly own himſelf a convert to his Reaſons, or ſhew cauſe why he is* not.

A

LETTER

TO THE

Rev. Mr. *BALL*, &c.

Taunton, Jan. 4, 1736-7.

Reverend SIR,

I HAVE read over your late extraordinary performance, and have the ſatisfaction to be able to ſay, that I heartily forgive the Writer, and wiſh him no other harm than a better ſpirit. Your Book is certainly an *original* in its kind; and as ſuch, it repreſents me an unuſual appearance, or new light, which the world had not ſeen for many hundred years; one that exalt myſelf above Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and teach moſt dangerous opinions. In the very Title you bring me

me upon the ſtage, like an eccleſiaſtical criminal, dreſſed in a ſort of *Sambenito,* and both there, and in your Book do, as it were, cry out as loud as you can—" Fellow-Chriſt-" ians, mark this man, and avoid him; let " no one admoniſh him as a Brother, for ſo " I never did, but count him an enemy, a " grievous wolf entered in among you, not " ſparing the flock, and therefore not to be " ſpared, nor treated according to the laws " of honourable war."

Now, though, after the moſt ſerious and impartial reflection, I am not ſenſible of my having given the leaſt juſt occaſion for the leaſt part of all this outrage, and owe you no thanks for attempting to ruin my reputation and uſefulneſs in the Church of Chriſt, yet I ſhall have great reaſon to bleſs God, if the unkind uſage I have met with prove the motive to my ſifting every part of my temper and conduct more narrowly than I had ever done before, humbling myſelf before God for my moſt ſecret errors, and improving in thoſe excellent, but too much neglected virtues, of meekneſs, gentleneſs, humility, forgiveneſs of injuries, brotherly kindneſs and charity. As an inſtance of this laſt, I ſhall endeavour, Sir, to convince you, that, under the ſpecious notion of zeal for your Maſter, you have, without any authority for it from him, been unmercifully beating your fellow-ſervant, and doing him the greateſt wrong.

Small

Small matters (though ſuch only *comparatively*) I paſs over, nor think it worth my while to complain, that there is not one good-natured paſſage, nor a ſingle ſentence that ſhews the leaſt relentings of humanity, much leſs that breathes a chriſtian ſpirit, throughout your Book; contented to point out the groſſer miſrepreſentations, which, in caſe they were as wilful as they are groundleſs, it would be difficult to reconcile with the character of an honeſt man; and, with all the ſoftneſs of which they are capable, diſcover ſuch an amazing degree of prejudice, as, perhaps, is ſcarcely to be paralleled in an Author of any learning, ſenſe and piety.

The Articles of my accuſation are as follow——Becauſe I freely declared, as many other greater and better men than myſelf have done, againſt that inhuman, let me add, and unchriſtian opinion, which damns all the *Heathen* world without exception, and without mercy, (*Proofs of a Future State from Reaſon*) therefore I am a friend to the *free-thinkers*, or *deiſts* of the age, and intended what I wrote for their ſervice and encouragement, that they might think themſelves in no danger, provided they were ſincere, (*Remarks*, p. 7, and 8.) though the two caſes, of men bred up in the darkneſs of heatheniſm, and our modern unbelievers, who live where Chriſtianity is the Eſtabliſhed Religion, and are apoſtates from it, are as

widely different as can well be; and I had expreſsly obſerved in favour of the charitable notion, (*Proofs of a Future State*, p. 139.) *That it greatly facilitates the anſwer to an objection againſt the Goſpel, from its imperfect promulgation, not more common than plauſible, and, according to the ſcheme which ſome men have framed of Chriſtianity, utterly unanſwerable.*

This reaſon (and it were eaſy to add others) is ſo obvious, of the peculiar acceptableneſs of this notion, of the ſalvability of the *Heathen*, to thoſe who are concerned for the honour of their Religion, and would effectually vindicate it againſt the reproaches of its enemies, that it is ſurprizing you could think of no other reaſon for this than that *ill-natured* one you mention. If I have miſtaken your meaning it is unwillingly, and muſt be imputed to the obſcurity of the paſſage, of which I can hardly make ſenſe without ſuppoſing an error or two of the Preſs. Your words are, *I can think of no other reaſon for mens pleading the caſe* (cauſe) *of the* Heathen, *than becauſe, as our Author tells us, we are in an age of free-thinkers, even againſt the plaineſt Scriptures. They may think themſelves in no danger if they are ſincere.* The ſentence, I apprehend, is wrong pointed, and, with the addition of a ſingle word, ſhould run thus. *I can think of no other reaſon for mens pleading the cauſe of the* Heathen, *than becauſe we*

we are in an age of free-thinkers, that, *even againſt the plaineſt Scriptures, they may think themſelves in no danger if they are ſincere.* For to whom does the word *they* refer but to free-thinkers? And who are the free-thinkers but, thoſe commonly meant by that name, the *deiſts?* Though, what paſſage you have in your eye, when you ſay, *The Author tells us we are in an age of free-thinkers*, I cannot gueſs, unleſs it be *Query* twenty-one, where the queſtion is put—Whether ſome conſideration ought not to be had of the prevailing genius and taſte of the *Age* for *rational knowledge*, and *freer inquiries?* But as theſe expreſſions of *rational knowledge* and *freer inquiries*, are very innocent in themſelves, ſo I never knew them uſed or underſtood in that invidious ſenſe which you ſeem to affix to them, as I dare ſay the Author of the Queries did not ſo intend them. You might therefore, at leaſt, have allowed me to have *deſigned well*; and if you thought my arguments did not come up to the point, you would have done much better to ſhew where the inconcluſiveneſs of them lay, than, leting alone his *arguments*, to attack the *ſecret intention* of the Writer, of which you had no commiſſion to erect yourſelf into a judge. What my thoughts are of the caſe of the *deiſts* you might have ſeen in my Diſcourſe of *Saving Faith*, p. 90, 91, 92. to which I refer you for ſatisfaction.

Becauſe I had ſaid, *I did not ſee why we might* not *have charity for thoſe that were ſunk deeper into idolatry* (than the perſons that had been juſt before mentioned) *provided they were honeſt minded, and did not ſo much want integrity of heart as a clearer knowledge of divine things. (Proofs of a Future State,* p. 183.) You firſt change the word *deeper* into *deepeſt*, and inſtead of the words *honeſt minded, and not ſo much wanting integrity of heart*, &c. ſubſtitute *not ſcandalouſly vicious*, and then aſk, What ſhall we ſay to this man's profeſſion of friendſhip to Revelation? *(Remarks,* p. 8.) While others, when they meet with this, and ſeveral inſtances more of immorality in writing, will be apt to think there is much more reaſon for putting the queſtion, *Where is the Remarker's regard to the rules of common equity and truth?*

Becauſe I did not apprehend what St. *Paul* ſaith in the firſt *Chapter* of his *Epiſtle* to the *Romans*, to include every individual perſon amongſt the *Heathens* in all ages and nations of the world, but only to expreſs their general character, you are pleaſed to put me in mind of another tranſlation of the *Bible*, which it ſeems the Rational Divines (among whom I have the honour to be ranked) hope for; in the marginal notes to which they are deſired to acquaint the world, when the Apoſtle is to be believed, and when not; after which you cry out, *Is this the uſe of Reaſon in Religion,*

Religion, to exalt it againſt the Scriptures? Further, very kindly inſinuating a parallel between me and *Socinus*, who, you ſay, would not believe a thing becauſe he found it in *Scripture*; to which you add, *You ſee then there are ſome that come up pretty near to his way of uſing the holy Scripture.* (*Remarks*, p. 8, 9.) And all this notwithſtanding I had expreſsly entered a caveat againſt any ſuch perverſe conſtruction of what I ſaid. (*Proofs of a Future State*, p. 164.) My words are, "*This Author* (Mr. *Hallett*) *having painted* "*that a vaſt deal blacker which was but too* "*black before, I hope I ſhall not give any juſt* "*occaſion of offence if I turn advocate for the* "*accuſed, not in oppoſition to the Apoſtle* Paul, "*(N. B.) every tittle of whoſe charge againſt* "*them I am ready to ſubſcribe to, but to Mr.* "Hallett, *who ſetting up for the Apoſtle's in-* "*terpreter, hath miſtook his meaning, and* "*aggravated things beyond all truth and cha-* "*rity.*" I dare believe you are not angry with me merely for differing from Mr. *Hallett*, but becauſe Mr. *Hallett* in the preſent caſe hath the happineſs to agree with Mr. *Ball* and his friends, whoſe comments are no more to be diſputed than the text itſelf. But you ought to have forgiven me, becauſe, till now, you had never let the world know your opinion in this matter, nor offered yourſelf to me for an infallible guide; though, if you had, I very much doubt, I ſhould have

taken the Proteſtant Liberty to judge for myſelf, not having heard that the Apoſtle *Paul* had deputed any one, whether at *Rome* or *Honiton*, or elſewhere, to declare his mind for him.

Becauſe I had recommended to Miniſters (*Sermon*, p. 18, 19.) "*The taking all opportuni-*
" *ties of ſhewing their hearers the excellency of*
" *the doctrines and precepts of our holy Reli-*
" *gion—The reaſonableneſs of the duties required*
" *of us, and the goodneſs of God in requiring*
" *them, and this the rather, becauſe our Sa-*
" *viour himſelf*, as a *Lawgiver*, *did not ſee fit*
" *to enter into the particular reaſons of his com-*
" *mands* (i. e. to enlarge upon them) *and to*
" *prove the divine original of his doctrine from a*
" *diſtinct conſideration of its nature and tendency,*
" *though he himſelf hints at this*," (as when he expoſes the abſurdity of the ſuggeſtion, that he caſt out devils by *Beelzebub* the prince of the devils from hence, that then *Satan would be divided againſt himſelf, and ſo his kingdom could not ſtand*; which, I take it, is arguing from the nature of his doctrine in conjunction with his miracles.) For this and no other reaſon, unleſs one that ſhall be conſidered preſently, I am accuſed of taking a new way of preaching, of which we have no example in Chriſt's preaching; that I think my own a better way, and to ſhew the excellence of it above that of Chriſt, offer at ſeveral things; that I caſt the greateſt reproach upon

upon Chriſt, and think myſelf wiſer, and more compaſſionate to the ſouls of men than he was. And the truth is, if this were really the caſe, you might well ſay, *Whither will pride carry men?* You ſay, *philoſophical* pride; to which queſtion give me leave to reply firſt, that *unphiloſophical* pride is no more a virtue of the Goſpel than *philoſophical*; and that the truly humble man is the furtheſt of any from ſo much as raſhly *ſuſpecting* others of pride, and much more from cauſeleſsly *charging* them with it in the face of the world, and with being puffed up with a *fleſhly mind*; the beſt language you can beſtow upon Dr. *Wiſhart* and me. Beſides I do not know where in the Sermon I have ſaid any thing of *philoſophy*, much leſs made empty boaſts, and a vain oſtentation of *my own*.

To the ſubſtance of the article I anſwer, that I verily believe the precepts of the Goſpel to be in themſelves excellent and reaſonable (*i. e.* founded in the nature of God and of man, the nature of the relations ſubſiſting betwixt them, as of Creator and creature, parent and off-ſpring, ſovereign and ſubject, benefactor and beneficiary, redeemer and redeemed; and finally, the nature of the circumſtances men are placed in) that this internal excellence of the precepts of Chriſtianity is one chief glory of our Religion, and included in the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, mentioned by the Apoſtle

Paul; that God did not only design to shew his *authority*, but also his *wisdom* and *goodness* in the Gospel constitution; all this I firmly believe, and fancy you yourself will hardly deny. I further observe, that our blessed Lord frequently subjoins to his commands one or more *reasons* of them (though he does not distinctly and largely enter into them, and argue from them to the truth of his Religion) for which I appeal to his admirable Sermon on the Mount (see particularly Chap. v. ver. 37, 45, and 48. Chap. vi. ver. 8, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25—34. Chap. vii. ver. 1—4. 7—11, 12, 13. in all which places he shews himself to be no enemy to the *reason of things.)* And, Oh, how much is it to be wished, that the amiable virtues injoined by our blessed Saviour, and to which he annexes a beatitude, were better practised by his followers! Those not excepted, who are such engrossers of the knowledge and love of Christ, that they will hardly allow their neighbours to have any share of them.

And now, if you please, let us *reason* a little upon the premises. It is a terrible word, I own, but you will forgive it. Can there be any harm in shewing the commands of the Gospel to be what they really are? To point out the wisdom and goodness of God in them? Or were these perfections displayed, that we should take no notice of them? To *amplify* upon those reasons which Christ hath mentioned

mentioned of his commands, and to produce others that are of weight and importance, and have a tendency to ſtrengthen the conviction of their duty in the minds of our hearers? Is doing this a mark of diſreſpect to our Saviour? Caſting the greateſt reproach upon him, and making ourſelves wiſer than he? What, to ſhew that he is the Author of a Religion every way worthy to come from God; a Religion moſt apparently calculated to promote the glory of God, and the happineſs of man, private and ſocial, preſent and future? This, I own, is making ourſelves wiſer than the *Author of our Faith* in the ſame ſenſe, and no other, as we make ourſelves wiſer than the *Creator of the world*, when, by the right uſe of that Reaſon which he hath given us, we ſhew his infinite wiſdom in framing it.

But ſhall Miniſters preſume to do what Chriſt and his Apoſtles did not? And, good Sir, do not they do this when they make entire diſcourſes, of a great length, nay and ſeveral, upon ſingle ſubjects, as upon a particular doctrine or duty of Chriſtianity, methodize them according to the rules of art, collect under diſtinct heads thoſe things which lie diſperſed in the word of God, and digeſt into a regular body the ſcattered parts and branches of Chriſtian doctrines, as in Catechiſms and other Summaries of Religion? By all which, according to this *new way of thinking*, they

they reproach the Scriptures as wanting perſpicuity, fulneſs, method and order, or ſomething elſe; nor is there any way of amending this but by a Miniſter's contenting himſelf barely to read the Scriptures; though this would hardly content the people, who would be ready to think they could do this as well themſelves, without being beholden to a Miniſter for it.

Only conſider the character and office of our bleſſed Saviour, and the circumſtances of his Miniſtry. Our divine Maſter planted a new Religion, wrought miracles, taught with authority, ſpent leſs than four years in his whole Miniſtry; during which time he did not confine his teaching to one ſingle place, but went up and down doing good, and preaching the Goſpel of the kingdom. And I hope, all theſe things laid together, he needed not that I ſhould make any excuſe for him (to uſe a modeſt and pious phraſe of your own) which you reckon I ought to have done, when I could make excuſes for the *Heathen*. The wiſdom is obvious to every one of the method he took. But what is all this to the ordinary Miniſters of the Goſpel, who are no workers of miracles, do not teach with authority in the ſame ſenſe Chriſt did, are not infallible teachers of a new Religion, but fallible expounders of one already fully taught, and labour years together

ther among the ſame People, who are bred up in the knowledge of the Chriſtian Religion, have the Bible in their hands, and perhaps, as to the words of it, are many of them, as well acquainted with it as their guide himſelf is? As to the Apoſtles, we have little more than the ſubſtance of their doctrine, either in the *Acts* or in their *Epiſtles*, as it could not indeed have been otherwiſe without ſwelling the Records of our Religion to an inconvenient bulk; beſides that ſome of the ſame obſervations made concerning our Saviour will hold of them too.

Becauſe in oppoſition to the way of repreſenting the *work of converſion* by ſome men, as of ſuch a nature that Reaſon and conſideration have little or no influence upon it, and the means made uſe of are not ſo properly the *means* as an arbitrary condition of the change produced, an immediate and irreſiſtible operation of the Holy Spirit doing all, and Faith as a moral cauſe or motive nothing; becauſe in oppoſition to this falſe account of the matter (as I cannot but think it) I make the change of the heart in converſion, under the influences of divine Grace, to be the effect of *rational conviction*, and *that* of *ſerious conſideration*, and ſuppoſe that it is by means of this latter, and not ſo directly, or immediately, that the promiſes and threatenings of the Goſpel produce their intended

intended effect, you charge me *, for daring to talk after this manner, with despising Christ's way of converting souls as indirect and round about, and as taking upon me to shew a more direct and ready way to heaven, and as relying, not upon the Holy Spirit, but upon the dint of Reason, in order to convey Religion into the heart (for I suppose you include me with Dr. *Wishart*) *Remarks*, p. 14, 16, 20. and then at last, in the ebullition of your zeal against the Doctor and me, and with an enthusiasm which no man in his sober senses will reckon *divine*, break out in these

* In the passages referred to above, after having asserted a proper subserviency in the Gospel to promote the work of conversion, I add, *Sermon*, page 26. "And if it be "granted that there is a real sanctifying virtue in the "Gospel, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, this "virtue must proceed from a fitness in the doctrines and "precepts of the Gospel to beget in us the love of God, "and of those qualities and actions that will render us "like God; which love must be the effect of a con- "viction, that the things which the Gospel ascribes to "God as adorable perfections, and requires of man in "order to his resembling God, are in their own nature "lovely and excellent. Even the *promises* and *threat-* "*enings* of the Gospel, do not, perhaps so *directly* (and "*immediately*) influence the conversion of the heart to "God, and our endeavours after holiness, but rather "*indirectly* (or *mediately*) as they work upon our passions "(of hope and fear) and thereby ingage us to consider "more seriously or *attentively*, than we should other- "do, the reasonableness of Religion, the intrinsick value "and native beauty of holiness, and great excellence of "all those divine and spiritual attainments which "Christianity obliges us to aspire after."

theſe extraordinary words, " Woe to our " Saviour when he falls into the hands of " Philoſophers and Rational Divines! His " enemies in his life-time called him a " *madman*; and what do theſe men call him " when they tell us he uſed a method in " preaching fit only *to pleaſe children and* " *fright fools?*" Really, Sir, I can hardly forbear catching a little of the contagion, and crying out with an indignation, I hope better grounded and more decent and charitable, " Woe to the moſt reaſonable Religion in the " whole world, when it falls into the hands " of men that are the avowed enemies of " Reaſon; the *Goths* and *Vandals* of the " Chriſtian Church! Woe to the Rational " Divines ſhould they fall under the power " of blind and mercileſs bigots!"

But to return from our tranſports; let me appeal to yourſelf as judge, when the hot fit is over, if your diſtemper be intermitting— Whether the whole glory of our converſion is not aſcribed to Chriſt in the paſſages juſt now quoted out of the Sermon? To the *Goſpel* he taught, and the *Spirit* he communicates? Is not Chriſt ſtiled the *glorious ſubject* of the Goſpel-Revelation, as well as the *divine Author* of it, of whoſe perſon and offices, his life and death, *&c.* and aſtoniſhing affection to the children of men, every faithful Miniſter of Chriſt is ſuppoſed to diſcourſe with pleaſure, and to take every opportunity of

of returning to them, and *preſſing the duties of the chriſtian life from theſe motives?* And is it not further allowed that he is the beſt preacher of Chriſt, whoſe way of preaching is beſt fitted to convince men of their need of Chriſt, and to bring them to truſt in him for grace and glory, according to the tenor of his promiſes, and to eſteem and love him, in the way which he himſelf deſcribes? (*Serm.* p. 26, 27.) It is true, *conſideration* is made neceſſary on our part (in the *Scripture*, if I miſtake not, as well as the *Sermon*, and, if it was not, inſtead of teaching a more *direct* I ſhould have taught a more *round about way* to heaven than Chriſt did, contrary to what I am accuſed of doing) and, more than this, I ſuppoſe it to be the Miniſter's part to aſſiſt his hearers in the practice of this duty, ſetting before them the ſubjects of conſideration in a proper and affecting light; among others, the grounds of that divine affection of *love* which is every where in the New Teſtament repreſented as the perfection of Religion, and in which the *converſion of the heart to God* does principally conſiſt, as laid in the *real lovelineſs of the object*; the nature of the chriſtian bleſſedneſs; the neceſſity of holineſs, not barely as the condition of obtaining this bleſſedneſs, but an eſſential qualification for the injoyment of it: to produce the love of God as the moſt amiable

Being,

Being, the love of holineſs as holineſs, and the hatred of ſin as ſin (of which I am ſpeaking in that place, and) which a bare abſtinence from the outward act of ſin, the bare promiſe or threatening, without any ſenſe and conſideration of the nature of the objects, is not of itſelf ſufficient to do; they may, indeed, immediately produce *hope* and *fear*, or great emotions and raptures of joy, upon a perſuaſion of our being intereſted in the promiſes, and exempted from the threatenings, eſpecially when this is apprehended to be by an *abſolute grace, which leaves out others.* And it is ſad to conſider, that converſion is too often placed in theſe affections to the ruin of many ſouls. But the love before deſcribed, the love of the *righteous Lord*, and of *righteouſneſs*, is, ordinarily at leaſt, the fruit of knowledge and conſideration, under the conſpiring influences of the Divine Spirit. If herein I am miſtaken you would have done well to have ſet me right; which you have not attempted by a ſingle argument, or what hath the face of one, and you cannot imagine I have my notions ſo much at command, that I can part with them as with my money, whenever a ſtern inquiſitor bids me deliver them; or that if it was in my power I ought to do it, to avoid ſuffering for them. But enough of this. To proceed now to another article.

Be-

Becauſe the Author of the Queries (*Query* 21.) had allowed that there might have been times when a dogmatical way of aſſerting things without proving them from *Reaſon*, or *Scripture*, (for *impertinent Quotations* from Scripture are no proofs) and raiſing the paſſions of people in a mechanical way was practiſed by ſome men, without naming *them* or their *Party*, (by *mechanical*, meaning whatever ſtrikes the imagination, and works up the affections without imparting any light to the underſtanding, or receiving any aſſiſtance from it) you will needs have it I tell the world that Chriſt took a dogmacal way in his teaching (notwithſtanding his proving the truth of his *Miſſion*, and conſequently of his *Doctrine*, by miracles and other ways.) Nay, you roundly aſſert the dogmatical way of preaching is the *phraſe* I give to Chriſt's, and that I am ſenſible the mechanical way of raiſing mens paſſions was the very way that Chriſt took. (*Rem.* p. 13, and 18.) This ſounds as if you really thought that Chriſt was a dogmatical and mechanical Preacher; but be your thoughts what they will, I aſſure you, Sir, I ſhould reckon it a very high diſhonour to our bleſſed Lord to ſay any ſuch thing of him. Nor hath the Author of the Queries ſaid any thing like it, unleſs his ſuppoſing it of certain Preachers muſt be conſtrued to this ſenſe.

I have

I have heard indeed of ſome men who fancied ſuch a proper *commutation of perſons* betwixt Chriſt and them, that their ſins are Chriſt's ſins, and Chriſt's righteouſneſs is their righteouſneſs; not barely as to the *effects*, but the *things themſelves*, mutually transferred by *imputation*; in which this doctrine is almoſt the reverſe of *that* of *Tranſubſtantiation*, and quite as unintelligible; the ſame *individual qualities*, in one caſe, wandering from ſubject to ſubject, while, in the other, the ſubſtance of the bread and wine is changed into the body and blood of Chriſt, the accidents or qualities ſtill remaining. But I cannot find the maintainers of this *communicatio idiomatum* have ever carried their notion ſo far as to ſay, that whoever takes notice of any little peculiarity, error, or imperfection in theſe unhappy favourites, does, *ipſo facto*, impute the ſame to Jeſus Chriſt, and Chriſt takes them on himſelf, if truly theirs. I beg, Sir, for the future, you will not make me ſay what I never ſaid, and abhor ſaying. Let the Reader have my own words, without mutilation, or addition, or any of your ſtretching paraphraſes and conſequences. *Charity* I expect none, no, not *pagan* charity, much leſs *chriſtian*, I know ſome men too well for that; but for *credit*, if not for *conſcience*, ſake, let us have a little *juſtice*; do not, either to gratify your own ſpleen, or that of another man, be guilty

of doing what in a court of human judicature would be deemed an iniquity to be punished by the Judge.

To the instances of *false-witnessing* already mentioned give me leave to add a most notorious one from *p.* 17. of your *Remarks*. You can I see leave out or put in words at pleasure, as best serves the design you have, to blacken and defame. In your quotation, *p.* 16. you, not quite so fairly as cunningly, drop those words which would have shewn the passage to be nothing at all to your purpose; but here of your great bounty you insert the following ones of your own, printing them in the same character with mine, that the Reader might imagine the whole to have been transcribed from me, *We shall love and thank God more* (sc. as the effect of this new way of preaching) *than we should do by Christ's way of preaching*. After which my own words begin, *For such a man contemplates God*, &c. You need not be told that I had not been saying a word in that place (*Pref. to the Proofs of a Future State* *) of

* It may not be *disagreeable to the Reader to have the whole passage set before him*; "Whoever demonstrates "the intrinsick beauty of holiness, and the foundation "which the commands of the Gospel have in the rea- "son of mens minds, and the nature of things; who- "ever goes further, and shews the doctrines of Christi- "anity to be either the result of the best and purest Rea- "son, an improvement upon it, or not contrary to it, "does good service to the cause of the Gospel, and, if "he

of Chriſt's way of preaching, and that it is quite foreign to my ſubject. But no matter for that, having begun to fling dirt you was reſolved I ſhould have enough of it. Let me further aſk you a few civil queſtions— Where do I acknowledge that my way of

" he does it from an inward veneration to Chriſt and " his Religion, is to be eſteemed a better friend to " both than another, who, in all matters of faith or " practice, looks only to the evidence and authority of " Revelation; which is putting the *Chriſtian Religion* " upon much the ſame level with the *Jewiſh*. Among " the doctrines of the Goſpel, which we ſhould expect " to be not only conſiſtent with Reaſon, but taught by " it, that of future recompences is one; and when the " Chriſtian finds that this is actually the caſe, that Rea- " ſon proclaims a Judgment to come as well as Revela- " tion, though it does not ſet it in ſo clear and affecting " a view, he hath a pleaſure which the man who never " obſerved this harmony between *Reaſon* and *Revela-* " *tion*, however pious he may be, is a ſtranger to; and, " other things being equal, is leſs likely to make ſhip- " wreck of Faith and a good Conſcience. Nay, the " homage which ſuch a one pays to the *Divine* " *Being* is more compleat; for he contemplates God " both as the God of *Nature* and the God of *Grace*, " and hears him ſpeaking to him *in divers manners*, by his " Works, and in his Word, by his own Conſcience, " by the univerſal Reaſon of mankind, by the Prophets " and Apoſtles, and by his own Son, the brightneſs of " his Father's Glory, and the expreſs image of his Per- " ſon; he attends to the voice of God in whatever way " directed to him, and reverences every notification of " his will, and certainly then is very unjuſtly charged " with not having a due regard to *Revelation*, which is " *one* of thoſe ways in which God hath manifeſted him- " ſelf to his creatures, and by him eſteemed the moſt " perfect, becauſe his regard to *that* is not joined with " a neglect of *all the reſt*."

preaching is never uſed by Chriſt or his Apoſtles *? Where have I ſaid that Chriſt uſed a method of preaching fit only to pleaſe children and fright fools? Or, Where have I given you any ground for that ſcandalous ſuggeſtion, That I do not believe the Scriptures are able to make men wiſe to ſalvation? Or, Where but ſeem to complain that St. *Paul reaſoned* upon nothing? Though you have

* *N. B.* The lower rank of Readers, for whoſe uſe Mr. *B.* muſt be preſumed to have publiſhed his Book, which is ſuited to them only, when they hear me charged with a new way of Preaching, which he ſays is acknowledged by myſelf to be ſo, will be apt preſently to conclude, either that I preach ſome new doctrine not taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and not barely plead for ſhewing the reaſonableneſs and excellency of *that* which they taught; or that I *ſuppreſs* ſome doctrine of theirs, laying aſide for inſtance the *promiſes* and *threatenings* of the Goſpel, and not merely contend for the neceſſity of *conſideration* that theſe promiſes and threatenings may produce the effect deſigned by them, *viz.* the converſion of the heart to God. Which latter is the truth of the caſe. And there is too much room to ſuſpect Mr. *B*--'s willingneſs that his Readers ſhould thus underſtand him, for where elſe is my crime? But if this were his view, his accuſing me of a new way of preaching, having nothing to ſupport it, cannot be cleared of the greateſt uncharitableneſs. It would have been impertinent, and ſomething worſe, to bring the promiſes and threatenings of the Goſpel into my diſcourſe, if I had not believed the accompliſhment of them; and much more to talk of their uſefulneſs to lead men to conſideration by working upon their paſſions, at the ſame time inſinuating to my hearers, that the *object* of their *hope* or *fear* was purely chimerical. So that the only thing on which the Remarker can ground this vile *innuendo* is an argument of the contrary to what he would infer from it.

have been pleaſed to uſe theſe more than friendly freedoms with me, I can ſcarcely think you take them to be a part of that liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free. For my own part, I do not know he hath given his followers any ſuch licence as this, to ſay all manner of evil againſt others, falſely, for his ſake. On the contrary, to thoſe who are thus uſed, he ſays, *Bleſſed are ye.*

The uſe and pertinence of what you add about *Epiſcopius*, Archbiſhop *Tillotſon*, Dr. *Clarke*, &c. it is hard to divine, unleſs to help extend your bulky Pamphlet to the number of twenty four pages, and to draw a further odium upon the Author of the Sermon, as if he was a ſlaviſh admirer of thoſe celebrated writers, and eſpouſed their notions, right or wrong; particularly, *that* of Mr. *Locke*, *that the wicked after death ſhall have no Senſe or Being*, which you ſay I mention without blaming him for it. Falſe again. Since I ſpend ſeveral pages in diſproving Mr. *Locke*'s interpretation of the firſt threatening, *In the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die*; unleſs you mean, that I blamed the *notion* but not the *man*; this I own, becauſe I thought my buſineſs was not to cenſure the man but to confute his notion.

Though I have not by any act of mine made myſelf anſwerable for any thing advanced by theſe great men, yet I ſhall take this op-

portunity to declare, that I honour their names, as eſteeming them an honour to their Country; that I bleſs God for the gifts and talents he hath beſtowed upon theſe, or any other Writers, by which they have been ſerviceable to mankind; that I look upon good ſenſe, and knowledge, and truth, whereſoever I find them, pure or mixed, in *Proteſtant* or *Papiſt*, *Orthodox* or *Heretick*, as lawful prize, of which I make all the advantage I can; that I can diſtinguiſh between the man and his opinions, highly valuing the one while I diſlike the other: and to the *queſtion*, which you introduce and aſk with ſo much triumphant ſcorn, Theſe are the men that are for rational inquiries, and free thoughts, *and ſhall the Diſſenters lackey after them?* I anſwer, by no means; either after them, or any other men, however named or reverenced, if by *lackeying* you mean taking things upon *their authority*, and not that of the *Scripture*; though I will frankly own that, were I to take my faith upon truſt, it ſhould be from thoſe that appear to have uſed the moſt pains to find out the truth; not from thoſe who while they aſſume a power to dictate, and determine for others, ſeldom or never think and reaſon for themſelves. If by *lackeying* you underſtand imitating them in ſuch things as a man verily believes to be laudable, I reply, not after them only, but after any other perſons, be they

they who they will, in whom we find things worthy of our regard and imitation; for I muſt own I hate that narrow way of thinking, which confines merit to any particular Party, or neglects and undervalues it when it is found in any other.

I thank you for the honourable mention you make of thoſe two Perſons whoſe memory will be ever precious to me, with whatever ſiniſter view you might do it. It is with pleaſure I recollect the example they gave of the reality and excellence of every chriſtian virtue in their own lives; how far their parental inſtructions were from having any thing ſower, auſtere, and diſcouraging in them, and their government from being ſevere and rigid; and that they finiſhed life with great chriſtian decency, not buſied in ſpreading ſcandal againſt their fellow-Chriſtians, not with their ſpirits imbittered and ruffled by envious and uncharitable paſſions, but wholly taken up in exerciſes becoming their age, and in preparation for that better world on which they were about to enter. I repeat my thanks, Sir, for your having given me an opportunity to offer up this ſmall tribute of grateful acknowledgement to the memory of thoſe, to whom, under the ſupreme Author of my Being, I am ſo much indebted. If they were no philoſophers, as you tell the world they were not, yet that they had no

averſion to philoſophy they ſhewed by giving their Son a liberal education.

After having poured out all this calumny from the fulneſs of your heart, or ſome body's elſe, you conclude, in a moſt ſurprizing manner, with a ſolemn appeal to heaven, calling God to record upon your ſoul (as you had done before in your Letter to the Reverend Mr. *D*——) To what? Not that you were not conſcious to any evil paſſion by which you were biaſſed; but, *directly*, that you did not write out of envy (I ſuppoſe you intend this of other paſſions too) but becauſe you could not be ſilent to ſee the way that our Lord took in preaching vilified. But, Sir, had you not thought your manner of writing would naturally make your Readers ſuſpect the contrary, what need was there of this unuſual appeal, and repeated too? As the *Pſalmiſt*'s words would have been more modeſt, ſo, the world will think, more proper and ſeaſonable too, in your caſe, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting.*

You muſt allow me, while it is in my thoughts, to be your remembrancer of a friendly admonition you received ſome years ſince from a Reverend and Learned Doctor in *L*——*n*, on a like occaſion, but which by your practice you ſeem to have forgotten,

Not

Not to take the Devil's work out of his hands, and turn accuſer of the brethren, which of all perſons a good man hath the leaſt warrant to do.

Upon the whole, your Pamphlet ſerves but the more to confirm me in my *reſolution*, not tamely to ſubmit my Faith or Practice to the haughty dictates of any man, or party of men whatſoever; and in my notion of the neceſſity of mens making more uſe of their Reaſon in religious matters, than they ordinarily do; and that Miniſters eſpecially ſhould ſtudy well the foundations, and immutable nature, of moral good and evil; ſince to their not doing this it muſt in a great meaſure be aſcribed, that perſons of ſincere piety can be guilty of the moſt ſhameful indecencies of paſſion, and even of things which the cenſorious world will be apt to call by a worſe name, and yet put all to the account of chriſtian zeal, making a kind of merit of that part of their conduct which a man of natural honour and benevolence, without much ſenſe of Religion, would bluſh to imitate.

And now, Sir, I can truly ſay, that I am ſorry for your having publickly expoſed yourſelf, as you have done, in the judgment of all unprejudiced and ſenſible Readers, who are acquainted with the truth and merits of the cauſe; and, as for the reſt,

you

you may, in caſe you think it worth your while, pleaſe yourſelf with the ignorant flatteries they beſtow upon you. It was with no little concern that I found myſelf obliged to write to you in this manner. But though, I confeſs, there are not many compliments in what I here ſend you, the occaſion not admitting them, yet I would fain believe that there is nothing that offends againſt Religion and good manners. It is without my being aware of it, if I have let any thing of that nature eſcape me. You know, Sir, notwithſtanding ſome Letters written by you to two very worthy Divines in this neighbourhood which were ſhewn me on the ſame argument, and in the like opprobrious ſtile, I continued ſilent; I drew up an anſwer indeed, once and again, but ſuppreſſed it, being willing to try if I could not this way overcome you, and loath, if it could be avoided, to give you any diſturbance in your old age. And even now that you have carried the affair into the publick, and made the world judges of it, endeavouring to poſſeſs all you can influence with the ſame ill opinion you yourſelf have of me, I ſhould, I believe, have truſted the iſſue to the judgment of diſintereſted perſons, without any more ado, if ſeveral of my friends had not again and again told me, that I ſhould be wanting to myſelf, to the cauſe of

of truth and liberty, and even to you, Reverend Sir, if I ſuffered ſo many heavy charges brought againſt me to paſs uncontradicted, and uncenſured. One thing that helped to determine me was, that I perceived your authority began already to be quoted. *What*, ſaid a man of great zeal and little knowledge, to another that would not ſubmit to his opinion concerning the ſenſe of ſome paſſages in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, *You are one of thoſe too that are for a new Tranſlation of the Bible! But pray, let us know when the Apoſtle is to be believed, and when not.*

I ſhall conclude my Letter with a few good wiſhes, *viz.* That the Miniſters of the Goſpel may have ſalt in themſelves, and peace one with another, eſpecially having ſo many other difficulties and diſcouragements to ſtruggle with. For you, Reverend Sir, that what remains of the evening of your days may be calm and ſerene, uſeful and happy; and when the time comes for your departure out of this world, you may leave it in a more chriſtian temper than that which you at preſent diſcover. And finally, for myſelf, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity I may have my converſation in the world, not giving any real ground for reproach; and then, whatever quarter it comes from, not troubling myſelf about it, regarding it only as an exerciſe of that charity and pati-

patience which I desire may always have possession of my breast. These are my unfeigned prayers to God, in which, I hope, notwithstanding any other differences between us, you will join with,

Reverend SIR,

Your once obliged, and

ever faithful Servant,

Henry Grove.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

DR. *Wiſhart* is ſuch a ſtrange man that I doubt nothing but Reaſon and Argument will do any good upon him. It will be to little purpoſe to bring railing accuſations againſt him, to pelt him with ill language, and exclaim, when you do not like an expreſſion, becauſe you do not underſtand it, *Was this man paſt all bluſhing?* As theſe are methods which the Doctor is above uſing himſelf, ſo he knows how to deſpiſe them when made uſe of againſt him by others. Nay, you will ſcarce make a convert of him, ſhould you be able to produce twenty more ſuch notable ſayings of good men on their death-beds, as that of his Father in Law Mr. *Halyburton*, who, we have your word for it, was a much greater man than the Doctor; which, I ſuppoſe, you expect we ſhould believe on the credit of this weighty ſentence *, *O Sirs, I dread mightily that a rational*

* Since the *above* was ſent to the Preſs, I am able, by the aſſiſtance of an ingenious Friend, to ſet the matter relating to Mr. *Halyburton* in a clearer light than I could

tional ſort of Religion is coming among us! Now, ſo far am I from dreading this, provided this Religion which ſome men are ſo apprehenſive of be *truly rational*, that I venture to ſay, *come and welcome*; ſince whatever Religion is *rational*, in the propriety of the term, muſt needs be *divine*. I hope,

Sir,

could before; not having ſeen the memoirs of his life till very lately. It is not eaſy to produce from any Author, the *Remarker himſelf* always excepted, ſo flagrant an inſtance of unfair quotation as this of Mr. *Halyburton*'s dying words. Would one have thought that he had immediately explained himſelf, what he meant by a *rational Religion*, when he ſaith *that he dreaded mightily that ſuch a Religion was coming in among us?* And that the explanation added ſhews him to have intended quite another thing than he is cited for by the Remarker? Yet this is actually the caſe. His words, as they are related by the Collector of them, are, *O Sirs, I dread mightily that a rational ſort of Religion is coming in among us! I mean by it a Religion that conſiſts in a bare attendance on outward duties and ordinances, without the power of godlineſs.* (*Memoirs* of his *Life*, p. 199.) I have tranſcribed the paſſage, that the Reader may judge how little truſt is to be given to ſome men, when they are alledging authorities to countenance an abſurd opinion, or to ſupport an ill-natured accuſation of an adverſary. The *Prefacer* to theſe *Memoirs* (who I am informed is an old Miniſter ſtill living in the neighbourhood of St. *Andrew*'s, and Brother in Law to Mr. *Halyburton*) ſays *p.* 4. of that Preface ——

" As to what we have of his dying words annexed " to the memoirs of his life, it is but a little we aſſure " you of what he ſpoke the laſt five days before his " death; ſome of the ſweeteſt and moſt ſavoury diſ- " courſes he had are wholly loſt, being *ſo mangled* by " the Writer that we were forced to drop them; for " great care was taken not to infert any thing but what

" he

Sir, though the Doctor was but *a little man*, a perſon of whoſe weight and authority you had no great apprehenſion, when you publiſhed your Pamphlet, you will now allow him to be ſomebody, *ſince the Magiſtates and Town Council of* Edinburgh, *agreeable to the inclinations (as it is thought) of moſt of the*

" he ſpoke. The occaſion of this was, *The Writer* " *was forced to ſtand at a diſtance, and out of his ſight,* " *becauſe when he obſerved him writing he was diſpleaſed,* " *and would not allow it.* Likewiſe the *noiſe* that ſome- " times was in the room, with People's ſpeaking to " him, their coming in or going out, and ordering " things about him, made the Writer *oft loſe half a ſen-* " *tence*; neither was it poſſible for thoſe that reviſed his " dying words to help this."

Now if we compare this account with the oddneſs of the epithet *rational* applied to a Religion that *conſiſts in a bare attendance*, &c. it is highly probable (as my Correſpondent juſtly obſerves) that the expreſſion uſed by the good man was *a notional ſort of Religion*; and this, perhaps, is not the only inſtance in which a *wrong hearing* in the Collector of theſe dying words may have occaſioned a *wrong rehearſing* of them. And it may be left to the judgment of every underſtanding perſon, whether, in the circumſtances above recited, it was poſſible for thoſe who reviſed theſe dying words, with all their care, to make us *ſure* of their having tranſmitted them to us *exactly as they were ſpoken*. But allowing the epithet *rational*, as it ſtands, to be genuine, though certainly exceeding improper to denote a mere formal outſide Religion, I may appeal to the conſcience of Mr. *Ball*, or, if he never read the Book quoted, *that* of the Perſon who furniſhed him with this paſſage, whether he really believes either Dr. *Wiſhart* or myſelf to be an advocate for a Religion that conſiſts in a bare attendance on outward duties without the power of godlineſs; and, if not, what name this way of citing authors,

in

the Members of the Univerſity, as it was with the advice of the Miniſters of the Town, who are by the Foundation to be adviſed with in that matter, have choſen him their Principal, *and the Town of* Edinburgh *have made choice of him to be one of their Miniſters there.* If I congratulate him upon this advancement, it is not ſo much from the perſonal and private regard which I have for the Doctor, though very great, as on the account of the *Publick*, to which he will have opportunities of being more extenſively ſerviceable in this higher ſtation of life; and becauſe I am well

in which they are made to *ſay* what they are known not to *mean*, deſerves to be called by. I make no doubt, the *very Reverend Principal* will join with me in dreading mightily that ſuch a ſort of Religion is coming in among us; and in thinking that whenever it prevails it will in a great meaſure be owing to mens diſcarding the uſe of Reaſon and common ſenſe in Religion; ſince no man who conſiders things as he ought, and reaſons upon them, will imagine that, when the *means*, as *means*, have no value but with regard to their *end*, a bare formal attendance on the external ſervices of Religion, can be acceptable to *God*, or profitable to *man*, not anſwering the great deſign of all ſuch duties, *viz.* to promote that temper of mind, and courſe of life, which is the very ſoul and vital power of all true Religion. For my own part, I ſee no other way of guarding againſt the two *extremes* of *formality* on the one hand, and *enthuſiaſm* on the other, but a ſober uſe of our reaſoning faculty, without which *true* Religion and *falſe*, the *appearance* and the *reality* are all upon a level.

My Correſpondent adds, I am well aſſured that none of Mr. *Halyburton*'s Writings which have been printed ſince his death were by him intended for the Publick, or finiſhed with that view.

well ſatisfied, if he accepts the ſervice, he will not deceive the expectations the world hath from his abilities and integrity.

Before I cloſe the Poſtſcript I would recommend to your conſideration, in your calmer minutes, the following places of Scripture, among many others, *Mat.* vii. 12. *John* xv. 12. *Phil.* iv. 8. 1 *Cor.* xiii. containing a deſcription of *Charity*, which, I am ſorry, when it is ſo particular and elevated, ſhould warm and impreſs the hearts of Chriſtians no more; *James* iii. 17. iv. 11, 12. Next to theſe, when you have leiſure, you will do well to peruſe ſome paſſages of the excellent Mr. *Baxter*, that *Rational Divine*, to whoſe judgment, I take it, you formerly payed ſome regard, whatever you do now.

Mr. *Baxter's End of Doctrinal Controverſies*, Chap. 16. of the State of *Heathens*, and others, that have not the Goſpel; particularly, §. 6. "They think (*viz.* thoſe that believe "the *Heathens* may be ſaved, of whom Mr. "*Baxter* himſelf was one) that the contrary "minded, by over-doing, are the greateſt "hinderers of the *Chriſtian Faith*, and pro-"moters of *infidelity* (mark that) while they "make it ſeem ſo contrary to God's own "attributes, and to human intereſt, and to "be a doctrine not of *glad* but of *ſadeſt* "tidings to mankind, *viz.* That none ſhall "be ſaved that hear not the Goſpel, when

" it is few comparatively that ever heard it,
" or can hear it."

And again, §. 37. " Having delivered
" that in this great queſtion, which ſeemeth
" to me agreeable to God's word, I adviſe
" thoſe that uſe to aſſault ſuch things with
" reproach, which they find reproached by
" their party, to remember that God is love,
" and Chriſt is the Saviour of the world,
" and the *phariſaical appropriators of mercy*
" *and ſalvation* ſeldom know what ſpirit
" they are of."

Saints Everlaſting Reſt, *Pref.* to the *Second Part*, §. 5. " Another great exception of
" the ſame man is, that, I ſeek to ſatisfy
" *Reaſon* ſo much of the Scriptures authority.
" —It is too near the *Socinian way*.—Is it
" not a ſhame that learned men ſhould
" charge this very opinion in *Chillingworth*,
" Dr. *Hammond*, and others, as guilty of *So-*
" *cinianiſm?*—How could all the wits in the
" world do more to advance *Socinianiſm*
" than theſe men do, by making men be-
" lieve that only the *Socinians* have *Reaſon*
" for their *Religion?* Which, if it were true
" (as nothing leſs) who would not turn to
" them? And what more can be done to the
" diſgrace and ruin of Chriſtianity, than to
" make the world believe we have no Rea-
" ſon for it?"

And again, §. 8. " If *Reaſon* were of
" no more uſe here then ſome make it, as
" it

" it were in vain to preach or write in this " point (for *Chriſtianity*) ſo it would follow, " that he that is drunk or mad, or an in- " fant (if not a brute) were the fitteſt to " make a Chriſtian; which is ſo vile an " imagination, that I dare ſay, *he that hath* " *the beſt and righteſt Reaſon, and by conſi-* " *deration makes the moſt uſe of it is the beſt* " *Chriſtian, and doth God beſt ſervice*; and " that all ſin is on the contrary, for want " of *right Reaſon*, and the uſing it by con- " ſideration. But, *methinks I ſhould not need* " *to plead for Reaſon, till beaſts can ſpeak and* " *plead againſt me.* But yet I muſt tell you " if you heard the accuſation, you would " excuſe my apology. If none but the *ig-* " *norant* be an enemy to *knowledge*, ſure " none but the *unreaſonable* is an enemy to " *Reaſon.*"

Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion, p. 491. " I perceive not that any conſiderable number " are troubled with doubtings of the truth " of the Chriſtian Faith, in a prevalent de- " gree, who are well convinced of theſe an- " tecedent verities of the *Deity*, and of the " *natural* obligation and *neceſſity* of holineſs, " and of the *immortality of the Soul*, or of " a future life of rewards and puniſhment, " and that live in any reaſonable conformity " to thoſe natural principles which they " profeſs; for when natural evidence hath " ſufficiently convinced a man that he is

" obliged to be holy, in abſolute obedience
" and love to his Creator, through the hopes
" and fears of another life, he is very much
" prepared to cloſe with the deſign and doc-
" trine of the Goſpel, which is ſo far from
" contradicting this, that it doth but confirm
" it, and ſhew us the way by which it may
" moſt certainly be brought to paſs. And
" therefore my obſervation and experiences
" conſtrain me to think, that there is no
" point I have inſiſted on which ſo much
" calls for my vindication, as the third,
" about the *life to come*. I know there is
" a ſort of over-wiſe, and over-doing Di-
" vines, who will tell their followers in
" private that the method of this Treatiſe is
" perverſe, as appealing too much to *natu-*
" *ral light*, and over-valuing *human Reaſon*;
" and that I ſhould have done no more, but
" ſhortly tell men, that all which God
" ſpeaketh in his word is true; and that
" *propria luce* it is evident that the Scrip-
" ture is the Word of God; and that to all
" God's elect he will give his Spirit to cauſe
" them to diſcern it; and that this much
" alone had been better than all theſe diſ-
" putes and reaſons: but theſe overwiſe
" men, who need themſelves no Reaſon for
" their Religion, and judge accordingly of
" others, and think that thoſe men who
" reſt not in the authority of Jeſus Chriſt
" ſhould reſt in theirs, are many of them

" ſo

" ſo well acquainted with me as not to ex-
" pect that I ſhould trouble them in their
" way, or reaſon againſt them, who ſpeak
" againſt Reaſon even *in the greateſt matters*
" *which our Reaſon is given us for.* As much
" as I am addicted to ſcribbling, I can quietly
" diſmiſs this ſort of men, and love their
" zeal, without the labour of opening their
" ignorance."

To what you ſay, *p.* 24. againſt taking the Confeſſion of Candidates for the Miniſtry only in Scripture words, let Mr. *Baxter* anſwer, *Saints Everlaſting Reſt*, *Preface* to the *Second Part*,—" Two things have ſet the Church on
" fire, and been the plagues of it above one
" thouſand years. 1. Enlarging our Creed,
" and making more fundamentals than ever
" God made. 2. Compoſing, and ſo *im-*
" *poſing*, our Creeds and Confeſſions in our
" own words and phraſes. When men
" have learned more manners and humility
" than to accuſe God's language as too ge-
" neral and obſcure (as if they could mend it)
" and have more dread of God, and compaſ-
" ſion on themſelves, than to make thoſe to
" be fundamentals or certainties which God
" never made ſo; and when they reduce their
" Confeſſions, (1.) To their due extent.
" And, (2.) To *Scripture phraſe* (that Diſſen-
" ters may not ſcruple ſubſcribing) then, and
" (I think) never till then, ſhall the Church
" have peace about Doctrinals. It ſeems to me

" no heinous *Socinian* notion which *Chilling-*
" *worth* is blamed for, *viz. Let all men believe*
" *the Scripture, and that only, and endeavour*
" *to believe it in the true ſenſe (and promiſe*
" *this) and require no more of others, and*
" *they ſhall find this not only a better, but*
" *the only, means to ſuppreſs hereſy, and reſtore*
" *unity.*"

FOUR

ESSAYS

ON

BENEFICENCE, BENEVOLENCE, NOVELTY, and the HUMAN SOUL.

1714.

*ESSAY I.

On the Pleaſure of BENEFICENCE.

Dicitis, omnis in imbecillitate eſt et gratia, et caritas. Cicero de nat. Deor.

MAN may be conſidered in two views, as a reaſonable, and as a ſociable Being; capable of becoming himſelf either happy or miſerable, and of contributing to the happineſs or miſery of his fellow creatures. Suitably to this double capacity, the contriver of human nature hath wiſely furniſhed it with two principles of action, ſelf-love and benevolence; deſigned one of them to render man wakeful to his own perſonal intereſt, the other to diſpoſe him for giving his utmoſt aſſiſtance to all ingaged in the ſame purſuit. This is ſuch an account of our frame, ſo agreeable to Reaſon, ſo much for

* Theſe Four Eſſays were firſt printed in the *Eighth* Volume of the *Spectator*. N°. 588, 601, 626, 635.

for the honour of our Maker, and the credit of our ſpecies, that it may appear ſomewhat unaccountable what ſhould induce men to repreſent human nature as they do under characters of diſadvantage, or, having drawn it with a little and ſordid aſpect, what pleaſure they can poſſibly take in ſuch a picture. Do they reflect that it is their own, and, if we will believe themſelves, is not more odious than the original?

One of the firſt that talked in this lofty ſtrain of our nature was *Epicurus*. Beneficence, would his followers ſay, is all founded in weakneſs; and, whatever he pretended, the kindneſs that paſſeth between men and men is by every man directed to himſelf. This, it muſt be confeſſed, is of a piece with the reſt of that hopeful philoſophy, which having patched man up out of the four elements, attributes his Being to Chance, and derives all his actions from an unintelligible declination of atoms. And for theſe glorious diſcoveries the Poet is beyond meaſure tranſported in the praiſes of his hero, as if he muſt needs be ſomething more than man, only for an endeavour to prove that man is in nothing ſuperior to beaſts.

In this ſchool was Mr. *Hobbes* inſtructed to ſpeak after the ſame manner, if he did not rather draw his knowledge from an obſervation of his own temper; for he ſomewhere unluckily lays down this as a rule,

" That

" That from the ſimilitudes of thoughts " and paſſions of one man to the thoughts " and paſſions of another, whoſoever looks " into himſelf, and conſiders what he doth " when he thinks, hopes, fears, *&c.* and " upon what grounds, he ſhall hereby read " and know what are the thoughts and " paſſions of all other men upon the like " occaſions." Now we will allow Mr. *Hobbes* to know beſt how he was inclined; but in earneſt, I ſhould be heartily out of conceit with myſelf, if I thought myſelf of this unamiable temper, as he affirms, and ſhould have as little kindneſs for my ſelf as for any body in the world. Hitherto I always imagined that kind and benevolent propenſions were the original growth of the heart of man, and, however checked and overtoped by counter inclinations that have ſince ſprung up within us, have ſtill ſome force in the worſt of tempers, and a conſiderable influence on the beſt. And, methinks, it is a fair ſtep towards the proof of this, that the moſt beneficent of all beings is he who hath an abſolute fulneſs of perfection in himſelf, who gave exiſtence to the univerſe, and ſo cannot be ſuppoſed to want that which he communicated, without diminiſhing from the plenitude of his own power and happineſs.

The Philoſophers before mentioned have indeed done all that in them lay to invalidate this

this argument; for placing the gods in a ſtate of the moſt elevated bleſſedneſs, they deſcribe them as ſelfiſh as we poor miſerable mortals can be, and ſhut them out from all concern for mankind, upon the ſcore of their having no need of us. But if he that ſiteth in the heavens wants not us, we ſtand in continual need of him; and ſurely, next to the ſurvey of the immenſe treaſures of his own mind, the moſt exalted pleaſures he receives is from beholding millions of creatures, lately drawn out of the gulph of non-exiſtence, rejoicing in the various degrees of being and happineſs imparted to them.

And as this is the true, the glorious character of the Deity, ſo in forming a reaſonable creature he would not, if poſſible, ſuffer his image to paſs out of his hands unadorned with a reſemblance of himſelf in this moſt lovely part of his nature. For what complacency could a mind, whoſe love is as unbounded as his knowledge, have in a work ſo unlike himſelf; a creature that ſhould be capable of knowing and converſing with a vaſt circle of objects, and love none but himſelf? What proportion would there be between the head and the heart of ſuch a creature, its affections and its underſtanding? Or could a ſociety of ſuch creatures, with no other bottom but *ſelf-love* on which to maintain a commerce, ever flouriſh? Reaſon, it is certain, would oblige every man to purſue

purſue the general happineſs, as the means to procure and eſtabliſh his own; and yet if, beſides this conſideration, there were not a natural inſtinct prompting men to deſire the welfare and ſatisfaction of others, ſelf-love, in the defiance of the admonitions of Reaſon, would quickly run all things into a ſtate of war and confuſion.

As nearly intereſted as the ſoul is in the fate of the body, our provident Creator ſaw it neceſſary, by the conſtant returns of hunger and thirſt, thoſe importunate appetites, to put it in mind of its charge; knowing, that if we ſhould eat and drink no oftner than cold abſtracted ſpeculation ſhould put us upon theſe exerciſes, and then leave it to Reaſon to preſcribe the quantity, we ſhould ſoon refine ourſelves out of this bodily life. And indeed it is obvious to remark, that we follow nothing heartily, unleſs carried to it by inclinations which anticipate our Reaſon, and, like a biaſs, draw the mind ſtrongly towards it. In order, therefore, to eſtabliſh a perpetual intercourſe of benefits amongſt mankind, their Maker would not fail to give them this generous prepoſſeſſion of *benevolence*, if, as I have ſaid, it were poſſible. And from whence can we go about to argue its impoſſibility? Is it inconſiſtent with *ſelf-love?* Are their motions contrary? No more than the diurnal rotation of the earth is oppoſed to its annual; or its motion round its own center,

center, which might be improved as an illuſtration of *ſelf-love*, to that which whirls it about the common center of the world, anſwering to univerſal *benevolence*. Is the force of *ſelf-love* abated, or its intereſt prejudiced by *benevolence?* So far from it, that *benevolence*, though a diſtinct principle, is extremely ſerviceable to *ſelf-love*, and then doth moſt ſervice when it is leaſt deſigned.

But to deſcend from Reaſon to matter of fact; the pity which ariſes on ſight of perſons in diſtreſs, and the ſatisfaction of mind which is the conſequence of having removed them into a happier ſtate, are inſtead of a thouſand arguments to prove ſuch a thing as *a diſintereſted benevolence*. Did pity proceed from a reflection we make upon our liableneſs to the ſame ill accidents we ſee befal others, it were nothing to the preſent purpoſe; but this is aſſigning an artificial cauſe of a natural paſſion, and can by no means be admitted as a tolerable account of it, becauſe children and perſons moſt thoughtleſs about their own condition, and incapable of entering into the proſpects of futurity, feel the moſt violent touches of compaſſion. And then as to that charming delight which immediately follows the giving joy to another, or relieving his ſorrow, and is, when the objects are numerous, and the kindneſs of importance, really inexpreſſible, what can this be owing to but a conſciouſneſs of a man's

man's having done ſomething praiſe-worthy, and expreſſive of a great ſoul? Whereas, if in all this he only ſacrificed to vanity and ſelf-love, as there would be nothing brave in actions that make the moſt ſhining appearance, ſo nature would not have rewarded them with this divine pleaſure; nor could the commendations, which a perſon receives for benefits done upon ſelfiſh views, be at all more ſatisfactory, than when he is applauded for what he doth without deſign; becauſe in both caſes the ends of *ſelf-love* are equally anſwered. The conſcience of approving oneſelf a benefactor to mankind is the nobleſt recompence for being ſo; doubtleſs it is, and the moſt intereſted cannot propoſe any thing ſo much to their own advantage, notwithſtanding which, the inclination is nevertheleſs unſelfiſh. The pleaſure which attends the gratification of our hunger and thirſt, is not the cauſe of theſe appetites; they are previous to any ſuch proſpect; and ſo likewiſe is the deſire of doing good; with this difference, that being ſeated in the intellectual part, this laſt, though antecedent to Reaſon, may yet be improved and regulated by it, and, I will add, is no otherwiſe a virtue than as it is ſo.

Thus have I contended for the dignity of that nature I have the honour to partake of, and, after all the evidence produced, think I have a right to conclude, againſt the Motto

Motto of this Eſſay, that there is ſuch a thing as *generoſity* in the world. Though if I were under a miſtake in this, I ſhould ſay as *Cicero* in relation to the immortality of the ſoul, *I willingly err*; and ſhould believe it very much for the intereſt of mankind to lie under the ſame deluſion. For the contrary notion naturally tends to diſpirit the mind, and ſinks it into a meanneſs fatal to the godlike zeal of doing good. As on the other hand, it teaches people to be ungrateful, by poſſeſſing them with a perſuaſion concerning their benefactors, that they have no regard to them in the benefits they beſtow. Now he that baniſhes *gratitude* from among men, by ſo doing ſtops up the ſtream of *beneficence*. For though in conferring kindneſſes, a truly generous man doth not aim at a return, yet he looks to the qualities of the perſon obliged, and as nothing renders a perſon more unworthy of a benefit, than his being without all reſentment of it; he will not be extremely forward to oblige ſuch a man.

ESSAY II.

On BENEVOLENCE.

Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐνεργετὸς φυσικός. Antonin. Lib. 9.

NOTWITHSTANDING a narrow contracted temper be that which obtains moſt in the world, we muſt not therefore conclude this to be the genuine characteriſtick of mankind; becauſe there are ſome who delight in nothing ſo much as in doing good, and receive more of their happineſs at ſecond hand, or by rebound from others, than by direct and immediate ſenſation. Now tho' theſe heroick ſouls are but few, and to appearance ſo far advanced above the groveling multitude, as if they were of another order of beings, yet in reality their nature is the ſame, moved by the ſame ſprings, and endowed with all the ſame eſſential qualities, only cleared, refined, and cultivated.

Water is the ſame fluid body in winter and in ſummer; when it ſtands ſtiffened in ice, as when it flows along in gentle ſtreams,

gladdening a thouſand fields in its progreſs. It is a property of the heart of man to be diffuſive; its kind wiſhes ſpread abroad over the face of the creation; and if there be thoſe, as we may obſerve too many of them, who are all wrapt up in their own dear ſelves, without any viſible concern for their ſpecies, let us ſuppoſe that their good-nature is frozen, and by the prevailing force of ſome contrary quality reſtrained in its operations. I ſhall therefore endeavour to aſſign ſome of the principal checks upon this generous propenſion of the human ſoul, which will enable us to judge whether, and by what method, this moſt uſeful principle may be unfettered, and reſtored to its native freedom of exerciſe.

The firſt and leading cauſe is an unhappy complexion of body. The heathens, ignorant of the true ſource of *moral evil*, generally charged it on the obliquity of matter, which, being eternal and independent, was incapable of change in any of its properties, even by the Almighty Mind, who, when he came to faſhion it into a world of beings, muſt take it as he found it. This notion, as moſt others of theirs, is a compoſition of truth and error. That matter is eternal, that from the firſt union of a ſoul to it, it perverted its inclinations, and that the ill influence it hath upon the mind is not to be corrected by God himſelf, are all very

very great errors, occaſioned by a truth as evident, that the capacities and diſpoſitions of the ſoul depend, to a great degree, on the bodily temper. As there are ſome fools, others are knaves, by conſtitution; and particularly, it may be ſaid of many, that they are born with an illiberal caſt of mind, the matter which compoſes them is tenacious as birdlime, and a kind of cramp draws their hands and their hearts together, that they never care to open them unleſs to graſp at more. It is a melancholy lot this; but attended with one advantage above theirs, to whom it would be as painful to forbear good offices, as it is to theſe men to perform them; that whereas perſons naturally beneficent often miſtake inſtinct for virtue, by reaſon of the difficulty of diſtinguiſhing when one rules them and when the other.

Men of the oppoſite character may be more certain of the motive that predominates in every action. If they cannot confer a benefit with that eaſe and frankneſs which are neceſſary to give it a grace in the eye of the world, in requital, the real merit of what they do is inhanced by the oppoſition they ſurmount in doing it. The ſtrength of their virtue is ſeen in riſing againſt the weight of nature, and every time they have the reſolution to diſcharge their duty, they make a ſacrifice of inclination to conſcience, which is always too grateful to let its followers go

without ſuitable marks of its approbation. Perhaps the entire cure of this ill quality is no more poſſible, than of ſome diſtempers that deſcend by inheritance. However, a great deal may be done by a courſe of *beneficence* obſtinately perſiſted in; this, if any thing, being a likely way of eſtabliſhing a moral habit, which ſhall be ſomewhat of a counterpoiſe to the force of mechaniſm. Only it muſt be remembered, that we do not intermit, upon any pretence whatſoever, the cuſtom of doing good, in regard if there be the leaſt ceſſation, nature will watch the opportunity to return, and in a ſhort time to recover the ground it was ſo long in quiting: for there is this difference between mental habits, and ſuch as have their foundation in the body, that theſe laſt are in their nature more forcible and violent, and, to gain upon us, need only not to be oppoſed; whereas the former muſt be continually reinforced with freſh ſupplies, or they will languiſh and die away. And this ſuggeſts the reaſon why good habits, in general, require longer time for their ſettlement than bad; and yet are ſooner diſplaced; the reaſon is, that vicious habits (as drunkenneſs for inſtance) produce a change in the body, which the others not doing, muſt be maintained the ſame way they are acquired, by the mere dint of induſtry, reſolution, and vigilance.

Another

Another thing which ſuſpends the operations of *benevolence*, is the love of the world, proceeding from a falſe notion men have taken up, that an abundance of the world is an eſſential ingredient in the happineſs of life. Wordly things are of ſuch a quality as to leſſen upon dividing, ſo that the more partners there are, the leſs muſt fall to every man's private ſhare. The conſequence of this is, that they look upon one another with an evil eye, each imagining all the reſt to be imbarked in an intereſt, that cannot take place but to his prejudice. Hence are thoſe eager competitions for wealth or power; hence one man's ſucceſs becomes another's diſappointment; and, like pretenders to the ſame miſtreſs, they can ſeldom have common charity for their rivals. Not that they are naturally diſpoſed to quarrel and fall out, but it is natural for a man to prefer himſelf to all others, and to ſecure his own intereſt firſt. If that which men eſteem their happineſs were like the light, the ſame ſufficient and unconfined good, whether ten thouſand injoy the benefit of it, or but one, we ſhould ſee mens good-will, and kind endeavours, would be as univerſal.

Homo qui erranti comiter monſtrat viam,
Quaſi lumen de ſuo lumine accendat, facit,
Nihilominus ipſi luceat, cum illi accenderit.

But, unluckily, mankind agree in making choice of objects which inevitably ingage them in perpetual differences. Learn therefore, like a wise man, the true estimate of things. Desire not more of the world than is necessary to accommodate you in passing through it; look upon every thing beyond, not as useless only, but burthensome. Place not your quiet in things, which you cannot have without putting others beside them, and thereby making them your enemies; and which, when attained, will give you more trouble to keep, than satisfaction in the injoyment. Virtue is a good of a nobler kind; it grows by communication, and so little resembles earthly riches, that the more hands it is lodged in, the greater is every man's particular stock. So, by propagating and mingling their fires, not only all the lights of a branch together cast a more extensive brightness, but each single light burns with a stronger flame. And lastly, take this along with you, that if wealth be an instrument of pleasure, the greatest pleasure it can put into your power, is that of doing good. It is worth considering, that the organs of sense act within a narow compass, and the appetites will soon say they have enough. Which of the two therefore is the happier man? He who confining all his regard to the gratification of his own appe-

appetites, is capable but of ſhort fits of pleaſure? Or the man, who, reckoning himſelf a ſharer in the ſatisfactions of others, eſpecially thoſe which come to them by his means, enlarges the ſphere of his happineſs?

The laſt enemy to *benevolence* I ſhall mention is uneaſineſs of any kind. A guilty, or a diſcontented mind, a mind ruffled by ill fortune, diſconcerted by its own paſſions, ſowered by neglect, or fretting at diſappointments, hath not leiſure to attend to the neceſſity or reaſonableneſs of a kindneſs deſired, nor a taſte for thoſe pleaſures which wait on *beneficence*, which demand a calm and unpolluted heart to reliſh them. The moſt miſerable of all beings is the moſt envious; as on the other hand, the moſt communicative is the happieſt. And if you are in ſearch of the ſeat of perfect love and friendſhip, you will not find it till you come to the region of the bleſſed, where happineſs, like a refreſhing ſtream, flows from heart to heart in an endleſs circulation, and is preſerved ſweet and untainted by the motion. It is old advice, if you have a favour to requeſt of any one, to obſerve the ſofteſt times of addreſs, when the ſoul, in a fluſh of good humour, takes a pleaſure to ſhew itſelf pleaſed. Perſons conſcious of their own integrity, ſatisfied with themſelves, and their condition, and full of confidence in a ſupreme Being, and the hope of immortality,

ſurvey all about them with a flow of good-will. As trees which like their ſoil, they ſhoot out in expreſſions of kindneſs, and bend beneath their own precious load, to the hand of the gatherer. Now if the mind be not thus eaſy, it is an infallible ſign that it is not in its natural ſtate. Place the mind in its right poſture, it will immediately diſcover its innate propenſion to *beneficence.*

ESSAY III.

On NOVELTY.

—*Dulcique animos novitate tenebo.* Ov. Met. L. 1.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

WHEN I have ſeen young Puſs playing her wanton gambols, and with a thouſand antick ſhapes expreſs her own gaiety at the ſame time that ſhe moved mine, while the old Grannum hath ſat by with a moſt exemplary gravity, unmoved at all that paſt, it hath made me reflect what ſhould be the occaſion of humours ſo oppoſite in two creatures, between whom there was no viſible difference but that of age; and I have been able to reſolve it into nothing elſe but *the force of novelty.*

In every ſpecies of creatures, thoſe who have been leaſt time in the world appear beſt pleaſed with their condition: for, beſides that to a new comer the world hath a freſhneſs on it that ſtrikes the ſenſe after a moſt agreeable manner, *Being* itſelf, unattended with any

any great variety of injoyments, excites a ſenſation of pleaſure. But as age advances, every thing ſeems to wither, the ſenſes are diſguſted with their old entertainments, and exiſtence turns flat and inſipid. We may ſee this exemplified in mankind. The Child, let him be free from pain, and gratified in his change of toys, is diverted with the ſmalleſt trifle. Nothing diſturbs the mirth of the Boy, but a little puniſhment or confinement. The Youth muſt have more violent pleaſures to imploy his time. The Man loves the hurry of an active life, devoted to the purſuits of wealth or ambition. And laſtly, Old Age, having loſt its capacity for theſe avocations, becomes its own inſupportable burthen. This variety may in part be accounted for by the vivacity and decay of the faculties; but I believe is chiefly owing to this, that the longer we have been in poſſeſſion of Being, the leſs ſenſible is the guſt we have of it; and the more it requires of adventitious amuſements to relieve us from the ſatiety and wearineſs it brings along with it.

And as *novelty* is of a very powerful, ſo of a moſt extenſive influence. Moraliſts have long ſince obſerved it to be the ſource of admiration, which leſſens in proportion to our familiarity with objects, and upon a thorough acquaintance is utterly extinguiſhed. But I think it hath not been ſo commonly remarked,

remarked, that all the other paſſions depend conſiderably on the ſame circumſtance. What is it but *novelty* that awakens deſire, enhances delight, kindles anger, provokes envy, inſpires horror? To this cauſe we muſt aſcribe it, that love languiſhes with fruition, and friendſhip itſelf is recommended by intervals of abſence: hence monſters, by uſe, are beheld without loathing, and the moſt enchanting beauty without rapture. That emotion of the ſpirits in which paſſion conſiſts, is uſually the effect of ſurprize, and as long as it continues, heightens the agreeable or diſagreeable qualities of its object; but as this emotion ceaſes (and it ceaſes with the *novelty*) things appear in another light, and affect us even leſs than might be expected from their proper energy, for having moved us too much before.

It may not be an uſeleſs inquiry how far the love of *novelty* is the unavoidable growth of nature, and in what reſpects it is peculiarly adapted to the preſent ſtate. To me it ſeems impoſſible, that a reaſonable creature ſhould reſt abſolutely ſatisfied in any acquiſitions whatever, without endeavouring further; for after its higheſt improvements, the mind hath an idea of an infinity of things ſtill behind worth knowing, to the knowledge of which therefore it cannot be indifferent; as by climbing up a hill in the midſt of a wide plain, a man hath his proſ-

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pect enlarged, and, together with that, the bounds of his desires. Upon this account, I cannot think he detracts from the state of the blessed, who conceives them to be perpetually imployed in fresh searches into nature, and to eternity advancing into the fathomless depths of the divine perfections. In this thought there is nothing but what doth honour to these glorified spirits; provided still it be remembered, that their desire of more proceeds not from their disrelishing what they possess; and the pleasure of a new injoyment is not with them measured by its *novelty* (which is a thing merely foreign and accidental) but by its real intrinsick value. After an acquaintance of many thousand years with the works of God, the beauty and magnificence of the creation fills them with the same pleasing wonder and profound awe, which *Adam* felt himself seized with as he first opened his eyes upon this glorious scene. Truth captivates with unborrowed charms, and whatever hath once given satisfaction will always do it; in all which they have manifestly the advantage of us, who are so much governed by sickly and changeable appetites, that we can with the greatest coldness behold the stupendous displays of omnipotence, and be in transports at the puny essays of human skill; throw aside speculations of the sublimest nature and vastest importance into some obscure corner of the mind,

mind, to make room for new notions of no conſequence at all; are even tired of health, becauſe not enlivened with alternate pain, and prefer the firſt reading of an indifferent author, to the ſecond or third peruſal of one whoſe merit and reputation are eſtabliſhed.

Our being thus formed ſerves many uſeful purpoſes in the preſent ſtate. It contributes not a little to the advancement of learning; for, as *Cicero* takes notice—That which makes men willing to undergo the fatigues of philoſophical diſquiſitions, is not ſo much the greatneſs of objects as their *novelty*—It is not enough that there is field and game for the chace, and that the underſtanding is prompted with a reſtleſs thirſt of knowledge, effectually to rouſe the ſoul, ſunk into the ſtate of ſloth and indolence; it is alſo neceſſary that there be an uncommon pleaſure annexed to the firſt appearance of truth in the mind. This pleaſure being exquiſite for the time it laſts, but tranſient, it hereby comes to paſs that the mind grows into an indifference to its former notions, and paſſes on after new diſcoveries, in hope of repeating the delight. It is with knowledge as with wealth, the pleaſure of which lies more in making endleſs additions, than in taking a review of our old ſtore. There are ſome inconveniences that follow this temper, if not guarded againſt, particularly this,

this, that through a too great eagerneſs of ſomething new we are many times impatient of ſtaying long enough upon a queſtion that requires ſome time to reſolve it; or, which is worſe, perſuade ourſelves that we are maſters of the ſubject before we are ſo, only to be at the liberty of going upon a freſh ſcent; in Mr. *Locke*'s words, *we ſee a little, preſume a great deal, and ſo jump to the concluſion.*

A further advantage of our inclination for *novelty*, as at preſent circumſtantiated, is, that it annihilates all the boaſted diſtinctions among mankind. Look not up with envy to thoſe above thee. Sounding titles, ſtately buildings, fine gardens, gilded chariots, rich equipages, what are they? They dazzle every one but the poſſeſſor; to him that is accuſtomed to them they are cheap and regardleſs things; they ſupply him not with brighter images, or more ſublime ſatisfactions than the plain man may have, whoſe ſmall eſtate will juſt enable him to ſupport the charge of a ſimple unencumbered life. He enters heedleſs into his rooms of ſtate, as you or I do under our poor ſheds. The noble paintings and coſtly furniture are loſt on him; he ſees them not: as how can it be otherwiſe, when by cuſtom, a fabrick infinitely more grand and finiſhed, that of the univerſe, ſtands unobſerved by the inhabitants, and the everlaſting lamps of heaven

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are lighted up in vain, for any notice that mortals take of them? Thanks to indulgent nature, which not only placed her children originally upon a level, but ſtill, by the ſtrength of this principle, in a great meaſure preſerves it, in ſpite of all the care of a man, to introduce artificial diſtinctions.

To add no more,—Is not this fondneſs for *novelty*, which makes us out of conceit with all we already have, a convining proof of a future ſtate? Either man was made in vain, or this is not the only world he was made for: for there cannot be a greater inſtance of vanity, than that to which man is liable, to be deluded from the cradle to the grave with fleeting ſhadows of happineſs. His pleaſures, and thoſe not conſiderable neither, die in the poſſeſſion, and freſh injoyments do not riſe faſt enough to fill up half his life with ſatisfaction. When I ſee perſons ſick of themſelves, any longer than they are called away by ſomething that is of force to chain down the preſent thought; when I ſee them hurry from country to town, and then from the town back again into the country, continually ſhifting poſture, and placing life in all the different lights they can think of, *Surely*, ſay I to myſelf, *life is vain, and the man beyond expreſſion ſtupid or prejudiced, who from the vanity of life cannot gather he is deſigned for immortality.*

ESSAY IV.

On the large capacities of the HUMAN SOUL, *and the perfection of happineſs for which it is deſigned.*

Sentio te ſedem hominum ac domum contemplari; quæ ſi tibi parva (ut eſt) ita videtur, hæc cæleſtia ſemper ſpectato; illa humana contemnito.

Cicero Somn. Scip.

IF the univerſe be the creature of an intelligent mind, this mind could have no immediate regard to himſelf in producing it. He needed not to make tryal of his omnipotence, to be informed what effects were within its reach; the world as exiſting in his eternal idea was then as beautiful as now it is drawn forth into being; and in the immenſe abyſs of his eſſence are contained far brighter ſcenes than will be ever ſet forth to view; it being impoſſible that the great author of nature ſhould bound his own power by giving exiſtence to a ſyſtem of creatures ſo perfect that he cannot improve upon it by any other exertions of his almighty Will.

Will. Between *finite* and *infinite* there is an unmeaſured interval, not to be filled up in endleſs ages; for which reaſon, the moſt excellent of all God's works muſt be equally ſhort of what his power is able to produce as the moſt imperfect, and may be exceeded with the ſame eaſe.

This thought hath made ſome imagine, (what, it muſt be confeſt, is not impoſſible) that the unfathomed ſpace is ever teeming with new births, the younger ſtill inheriting a greater perfection than the elder. But as this doth not fall within my preſent view, I ſhall content myſelf with taking notice, that the conſideration now mentioned proves undeniably, that the ideal worlds in the divine underſtanding yield a proſpect incomparably more ample, various, and delightful, than any created world can do: and that therefore as it is not to be ſuppoſed that God ſhould make a world merely of inanimate matter, however diverſified; or inhabited only by creatures of no higher an order than brutes; ſo the end for which he deſigned his reaſonable offſpring is the contemplation of his works, the injoyment of himſelf, and in both to be happy, having, to this purpoſe, endowed them with correſpondent faculties and deſires. He can have no greater pleaſure from a bare review of his works, than from the ſurvey of his own ideas, but we may be aſſured that he is well pleaſed in the

ſatisfaction derived to beings capable of it, and, for whoſe entertainment, he hath erected this immenſe theatre. Is not this more than an intimation of our *immortality?* Man, who when conſidered as on his probation for a happy exiſtence hereafter, is the moſt remarkable inſtance of divine wiſdom; if we cut him off from all relation to eternity, is the moſt wonderful and unaccountable compoſition in the whole creation. He hath capacities to lodge a much greater variety of knowledge than he will be ever maſter of, and an unſatisfied curioſity to tread the ſecret paths of Nature and Providence: but, with this, his organs in their preſent ſtructure, are rather fitted to ſerve the neceſſities of a vile body, than to miniſter to his underſtanding; and from the little ſpot to which he is chained, he can frame but wandering gueſſes concerning the innumerable worlds of light that encompaſs him, which, tho' in themſelves of of a prodigious bigneſs, do but juſt glimmer in the remote ſpaces of the heavens; and, when with a great deal of time and pains he hath laboured a little way up the ſteep aſcent of truth, and beholds with pity the groveling multitude beneath, in a moment, his foot ſlides, and he tumbles down headlong into the grave.

Thinking on this, I am obliged to believe, in juſtice to the Creator of the world, that there is another ſtate when man ſhall be better

better ſituated for contemplation, or rather have it in his power to remove from object to object, and from world to world, and be accommodated with ſenſes, and other helps, for making the quickeſt and moſt amazing diſcoveries. How doth ſuch a genius as Sir *Iſaac Newton*, from amidſt the darkneſs that involves human underſtanding, break forth, and appear like one of another ſpecies! The vaſt machine, we inhabit, lies open to him, he ſeems not unacquainted with the general laws that govern it; and while with the tranſport of a philoſopher he beholds and admires the glorious work, he is capable of paying at once a more devout and more rational homage to his Maker. But, alas, how narrow is the proſpect even of ſuch a mind! And how obſcure to the compaſs that is taken in by the ken of an angel; or of a ſoul but newly eſcaped from its impriſonment in the body!

For my part, I freely indulge my ſoul in the confidence of its future grandeur; it pleaſes me to think that I who know ſo ſmall a portion of the works of the Creator, and with ſlow and painful ſteps creep up and down on the ſurface of this globe, ſhall e'er long ſhoot away with the ſwiftneſs of imagination, trace out the hidden ſprings of Nature's operations, be able to keep pace with the heavenly bodies in the rapidity of their career, be a ſpectator of the long chain

of events in the natural and moral worlds viſit the ſeveral apartments of the creation, know how they are furniſhed and how inhabited, comprehend the order, and meaſure the magnitudes and diſtances of thoſe orbs, which to us ſeem diſpoſed without any regular deſign, and ſet all in the ſame circle; obſerve the dependence of the parts of each ſyſtem, and (if our minds are big enough to graſp the theory) of the ſeveral ſyſtems upon one another, from whence reſults the harmony of the univerſe. In *eternity* a great deal may be done of this kind. I find it of uſe to cheriſh this generous ambition; for beſides the ſecret refreſhment it diffuſes through my ſoul, it ingages me in an endeavour to improve my faculties, as well as to exerciſe them conformably to the rank I now hold among reaſonable beings, and the hope I have of being once advanced to a more exalted ſtation.

The other, and that the ultimate end of man, is the injoyment of God, beyond which he cannot form a wiſh. Dim at beſt are the conceptions we have of the Supreme Being, who, as it were, keeps his creatures in ſuſpence, neither diſcovering, nor hiding himſelf; by which means, the *libertine* hath a handle to diſpute his exiſtence, while the moſt are content to ſpeak him fair, but in their hearts prefer every trifling ſatisfaction to the favour of their Maker, and ridicule the good man for the ſingularity of his choice. Will

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there not a time come, when the *free-thinker* ſhall ſee his impious ſchemes overturned, and be made a convert to the truths he hates; when deluded mortals ſhall be convinced of the folly of their purſuits, and the few wiſe who followed the guidance of heaven, and, ſcorning the blandiſhments of ſenſe and the ſordid bribery of the world, aſpired to a celeſtial abode, ſhall ſtand poſſeſſed of their utmoſt wiſh in the viſion of the Creator?

Here the mind heaves a thought now and then towards him, and hath ſome tranſient glances of his Preſence; when, in the inſtant it thinks itſelf to have the faſteſt hold, the object eludes its expectations, and it falls back tired and baffled to the ground. Doubtleſs there is ſome more perfect way of converſing with heavenly beings. Are not ſpirits capable of mutual intelligence, unleſs immerſed in bodies, or by their intervention? Muſt ſuperior natures depend on inferior for the main privilege of ſociable beings, that of converſing with, and knowing each other? What would they have done had matter never been created? I ſuppoſe, not have lived in eternal ſolitude. As incorporeal ſubſtances are of a nobler order, ſo be ſure, their manner of intercourſe is anſwerably more expedite and intimate. This method of communication, we call *intellectual viſion*, as ſomewhat analogous to the ſenſe of ſeeing, which is the medium of our acquaintance with this viſible

world. And in ſome ſuch way can God make himſelf the object of immediate intuition to the bleſſed; and as he can it is not improbable that he will, always condeſcending, in the circumſtances of doing it, to the weakneſs and proportion of finite minds. His works but faintly repreſent the image of his perfections, it is a ſecond-hand knowledge; to have a juſt idea of him, it may be neceſſary *that we ſee him as he is*. But what is that? It is ſomething that never entered into the heart of man to conceive; yet, what we can eaſily conceive, will be a fountain of unſpeakable, of everlaſting rapture. All created glories will fade and die away in his Preſence. Perhaps, it will be my happineſs to compare the world with the fair exemplar of it in the divine mind; perhaps, to view the original plan of thoſe wiſe deſigns that have been executing in a long ſucceſſion of ages. Thus imployed in finding out his works, and contemplating their author, how ſhall I fall proſtrate and adoring, my body ſwallowed up in the immenſity of matter, my mind in the infinitude of his perfections!

FIVE

LETTERS

To the Author of the

St. JAMES'S JOURNAL,

CONCERNING

The PRESBYTERIANS, Civil Power, Liberty of the Will, and the Immortality of the Soul.

1722.

* LETTER I.

A Defence of the PRESBYTERIANS.

S I R, *Taunton*, *June* 27, 1722.

I HOPE your Readers will pardon me, if for once I beg the favour to entertain them, by taking up a part of your paper which you could have filled much more agreeably yourſelf; the occaſion of this requeſt is a Letter of *Cato* in the *London Journal*, of the 16th Inſtant, *

proving, that the Church can be in no danger from the Diſſenters, and therefore need not grudge them their *Toleration*, or fear giving them the *Teſt Act* into the bargain, which is certainly a very honeſt and obvious argument; but there are ſeveral paſſages in it which we beg leave to conſider.

“ The

* Theſe Letters were firſt publiſhed in the St. *James's Journal*. N°. 10, 16, 17, 42, 47.

" The Independents, Anabaptiſts, and Qua-
" kers, have, he ſays, much more favour-
" able opinions of the National Clergy than
" of the Preſbyterians, (the only rivals for
" Church Power) from whom they appre-
" hend, and have always found much worſe
" uſage than from the Church." This, you muſt know, he ſpeaks out of a pure kindneſs to the Diſſenters, whoſe intereſt and peace he hath very much at heart, and not to ſet them together by the ears. But the meaning lies ſo bare, that, it is to be hoped, the wiſer part, at leaſt, of every Denomination, will be cautious how they give into the ſnare, or by mutual jealouſies deſtroy that happy harmony to which they owe all their credit and weight as Diſſenters. If there was a time when the Preſbyterians bore too hard upon thoſe of other perſuaſions, it ought to be conſidered that this was when the ſpirits of the nation were chafed with civil diſſenſions, which left them not the power of thinking ſo coolly of things as they might otherwiſe have done, and was really more the error of the *times* than of the *men*; the true principles of liberty, both civil and religious, not having been ſtated with that clearneſs, or defended with that ſtrength of argument, then, as they have ſince been by the incomparable Mr. *Locke*, the excellent

Biſhop

Biſhop of * *Hereford*, and other good hands. And one fault ſurely, committed in the times of ignorance, may be forgiven; and ought not, in juſtice, to be imputed to thoſe, who, beſides that they were never perſonally guilty themſelves, are far from juſtifying them that were.

Did they not, on the contrary, in the beginning of Queen *Anne*'s reign, readily concur with the two other Denominations in a Letter to their friends in *New-England*, in behalf of the Quakers there? Than which Letter, by the way, I hardly know whether I have ſeen any thing that breathes a better ſpirit, or is more handſomly and ſtrongly penned on the ſide of liberty, in ſo ſmall a compaſs. And, if my memory does not deceive me, the firſt Addreſs to his preſent Majeſty from the Diſſenting Miniſters of the three Denominations, contains a glorious teſtimony to the ſame cauſe. All this, methinks, might atone for one ſlip, not their own, and merit an act of perpetual oblivion. And, of all men, the Baptiſts and Quakers ſhould be leaſt forward to upbraid the Preſbyterians of this age with what was done in a former, when they themſelves would reckon it an extreme hardſhip to be made anſwer for all the extravagances that have been formerly ſaid or done, by people paſſing under the ſame names that they are now known by.

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* The Reverend and Learned Dr. *Hoadley*, now Biſhop of *Wincheſter*.

There have been fanaticks, enthuſiaſts, and perſecutors in all forms of Religion; but it would be the unjuſteſt thing in the world, to charge whole bodies with the faults or follies of particular men; and, in ſucceſſive generations, to imagine, that tho' the perſons are different, their characters and opinions muſt be exactly the ſame. At leaſt, let there be equal dealing, that if the *failings* of their Predeceſſors muſt be placed to the account of the Modern Preſbyterians, they may be entitled to a ſhare in their *virtues* too; and, upon theſe terms, they need not be aſhamed of their name, or bluſh at a compariſon with their fellow-chriſtians of other diſtinctions.

Now I am upon this head, there is one thing I cannot but remark, as arguing either vile diſingenuity, or as groſs ignorance; and that is, that though our Author carefully diſtinguiſhes between the Preſbyterians and the Independents, yet that the former may not want their load, the ſufferings of ſome in *New-England* on the ſcore of their opinions, are laid to their door, while every body knows that the Churches of *New-England* are of the *Congregational Way:* which I mention not out of any prejudice to the perſons of that perſuaſion, (ſince as the *American* Independents are now in as generous ſentiments as any of the known friends to liberty can be, ſo their brethren here in *England*,

gland, did in the year 1669 expreſs, by Letter, their diſlike of all rigorous proceedings on account of religious differences) but to ſhew the temper of the man. When he afterwards tells his Readers, that the Preſbyterians are candidates for *Church Dominion*, it is a ſign he does not know the men, or their ſcheme; there not being one of many, by what I can judge from the acquaintance I have with them, but is of opinion—That every particular Church or Society of Chriſtian ſhath full power within itſelf to regulate its own affairs: nor are their aſſembles any proof of the contrary, being no other than prudential and voluntary aſſociations of men, whoſe buſineſs is not to dictate but adviſe, and, at moſt, to agree upon *Rules* for their own conduct, not to frame *Canons* and *Decrees* for others.

Their Prieſts, if his account of them be true, have hawks eyes at the Church-Preferments. And ſo they had need, to ſpy them at ſuch a diſtance; and if they have the eyes, I would be glad to know who have the talons? But when did they diſcover ſuch a zeal for Preferments? Was it, when ſome of the moſt conſiderable dignities of the Church were offered to Mr. *Baxter* and others, and refuſed? Was it, when about *two thouſand* Miniſters left their Places in the Church, becauſe they could not keep them with a good conſcience? As remarkable an example of a great

great number of men acting upon principle, as perhaps any that can be produced since the first golden age of Christianity. Such a noble contempt did the Fathers express for the Temporalities of the Church, when they must either forego them, or resolve to buy them at the price of what they held dearer than life.

And wherein have their Sons shewn themselves to be so perfectly degenerated from this excellent pattern? Many among them are not so very much inferior to the major part of the Established Clergy, but that in case they were minded to venture in the Church-Lottery, they might have the chance of a prize as well as their neighbours; and, at worst, might make a better hand of it than they do among the Dissenters. But, in regard they must offer violence to something in their bosoms, before they can bring themselves to a compliance with the present terms of Conformity, they judge it their best way to continue where they are, without giving themselves the liberty, in the mean while, to censure others, who having different views of the matter, can very honestly go greater lengths than they are able to do. They are not conscious to their having forfeited the testimony which King *Charles* the Second formerly gave some of the principal assertors of the Presbyterian opinions, *viz.* "That to "his great satisfaction and comfort, he "found

" found them perſons full of affection to " him, of zeal for the peace of the Church " and of the State, and neither enemies to " Epiſcopacy or Liturgy; but modeſtly to " deſire ſuch alterations in either, as with- " out ſhaking foundations, might beſt allay " preſent diſtempers."

In ſhort, inſinuations of ambition and worldlineſs in others, unſupported by facts, if they prove any thing, do only betray the predominant paſſions of the man that makes them; and this they do too plainly, for a frank, honeſt nature is the furtheſt in the world from entertaining and propagating evil ſuſpicions of the appearingly innocent: ſuch a one can eaſily believe that others may have the ſame indifference to wealth and grandeur, and the ſame averſion to artifice and diſguiſe, that he finds in himſelf.

We agree with the Author of the *Journal*, " That the Preſbyterians are too inconſidera- " ble both for number and figure, to give the " Church any juſt apprehenſions;" but then we beg leave to add, that their inclination to diſturb the Eſtabliſhment is even leſs, much leſs than their power. They are well content that the Eſtabliſhed Church, as the favourite daughter, ſhould carry away the fortune; nor do they envy her her beauty, tho' they think it would appear with never the leſs advantage, if ſhe dreſſed ſomewhat more plainly. There is further, I doubt, too much

much truth in the obſervation, " That when " any grow rich, and leave eſtates behind " them, their Sons, for the moſt part, deſert " the Diſſenting Congregations and Intereſt;" but how is this more to their reproach, than it was to St. *Paul*'s, that *Demas* forſook him out of love to the preſent world? That their cauſe hath the fate to be eſpouſed by ſo few of the great men of the world, doth not at all leſſen it in their own eſteem; for tho' *Bellarmine* makes numbers and external ſplendor *marks* of the true Church, I do not remember that any Proteſtant Divine or Layman hath advanced ſuch an aſſertion.

He compliments the Non-Subſcribers with being the moſt conſiderable for fortune and underſtanding; how deſervedly, let thoſe judge who are beſt able. I fancy they will hardly take it for ſo great a compliment to their underſtandings what he ſubjoins, " that " by degrees many of theſe will in all proba- " bility come into the Church;" all I can ſay, if they do ſo, is that they will act even more inconſequentially than *Cato* reaſons. His reflections on the Church of *Scotland* have ſo little of juſtice or good-manners in them, that he ſeems to have forgotten that the form of government in that part of *Great Britain*, is as much the Legal Eſtabliſhment, as Epiſcopacy is here; and to be in a diſpoſition to attempt, what he ſaith no wiſe man would, the removing of the antient land marks.

The

The truth of what he aſſerts concerning the *Sacramental Teſt*, I ſhall not trouble myſelf to diſpute; I would only improve it as an argument of the diſintereſtedneſs of the Preſbyterians, in that their concern for the repeal of this Act, by which, we have *Cato*'s Authority, they would be no gainers, but loſers, can be juſtly attributed to nothing elſe but a regard to the honour of Religion and the Nation, which, they apprehend, ſuffers not a little by the proſtitution of this *ſolemn action*; and to a principle of benevolence towards their Proteſtant brethren and fellow-ſubjects, whom they are deſirous to have placed upon the ſame foot with themſelves for preferment.

Before I conclude, I would beg the Reader to look back on the general character and behaviour of our fault-finder. He firſt attacked the Clergy in a moſt outragious manner, profeſſedly thoſe of the *High Sort* only, but more covertly the whole order; in honour of whom he obſerves, that any common mechanick may perform what are uſually reckoned the moſt peculiar parts of their office, ſuch as preaching and adminiſtring the Lord's-Supper; ſo great is this Gentleman's fear, leſt the diſtinction ſhould drop between the Clergy and Laity in the Chriſtian Church! That they are the almſmen of the people; ſuch is their dignity! And, as an inſtance of their uſefulneſs, and even neceſſity to the world, that tho' there have

been near a *million* of them kept in conſtant pay for the beſt part of ſeventeen hundred years, to teach the world by their precepts, and to reform it by their examples, yet they will not pretend that Religion is plainer, the Scriptures better underſtood, or that mankind are more wiſe or virtuous for all their inſtructions.

His next ſtep was to revile and libel human nature, in his draught of which he copied after good Mr. *Hobbes*, deſcribing all men as knaves in principle and inclination, and virtuous only when they cannot help it, or are under no temptation to be otherwiſe: this is his Cant in ſeveral of the Journals. Then the Government is ſo unhappy as to fall under his diſpleaſure, which, like a good ſubject of King *George*, and one that does all he can to expoſe the unreaſonableneſs of the diſaffection and prejudice conceived againſt him, he repreſents as ingaged in a conſpiracy to deſtroy the Liberties of the Nation; of which good ſervice of his there is no queſtion, the Adminiſtration retains a grateful remembrance. After this he flies at lower game, and lays his dreadful paw on the poor Preſbyterians, ſome imagine, with a deſign to make his peace with the Church, as in the former Journal he broke off from his antient allies the Republicans, to make his court to the Monarchy.

There

There were at *Athens* a ſort of refuſe people, whom they called καθαρμάτα and περιψήματα, as eſteeming them good for little elſe but to be ſacrificed and flung into the ſea, to reconcile and propitiate the gods to others. The Preſbyterians have been often put to a like uſe. This inclination of our Author to draw upon every one that comes in his way, or rather, like a true knight errant as he is, to ramble out of it in queſt of adventures, brings to mind a witty epitaph, that I have met with, on the famous *Aretin*, written in *Italian*, and thus tranſlated into *Engliſh*.

Here lies a man that no man ſpar'd,
When th' angry fit was on him,
Nor God himſelf had better far'd,
If Aretin *had known him.*

I am, Sir,

Your moſt humble Servant.

N. B. The Princes of thoſe times were ſo gauled by *Aretin*'s ſatyrical Writings, that, as the Hiſtorian takes notice, he came to be better known by the title of the Scourge of Princes, than under the Name of *Aretin*. He made Kings tributary to him by his Pen, glad that they could ſo redeem themſelves.

It is not impoſſible but a certain ſcribler among us may flatter himſelf with hopes of becoming formidable the ſame way, and obliging his ſuperiors to purchaſe peace of him upon his own terms; which he will be never likely to do, as long as there is any difference between ill-nature and wit, and between calumny and truth.

LETTER II.

Of the Origin and Extent of CIVIL POWER.

SIR, *Taunton, Auguſt* 1, 1722.

AMONG our political Writers, two parties have diſtinguiſhed themſelves concerning the Original and Extent of Civil Power, the Popular and the Patriarchal; thoſe who aſſert all Power to be a gift of the people transferring the Power, which nature had veſted ſeverally in them, into ſome publick hand, to be imployed for the good of the community; and thoſe that derive it from God, by an immediate and poſitive grant to the firſt man, from whom it deſcended to his next heir, and ſo downward, in a lineal ſucceſſion, as far as the changeable nature of human things, and the reaſons of Providence would permit. There may, poſſibly, be advantages peculiar to each of theſe ſchemes; and whether the patrons of them will own it or no, there are difficulties and objections too that embarraſs both: tho' I verily believe, abundantly more, and more ſhocking, that of the hereditary inde-

feaſable right men, than the other. Now if there be any third hypotheſis, which, having the main advantages of theſe two, provides againſt the ill-conſequences of each, it ought certainly to have the preference, by whatſoever hand it happens to be offered. I am miſtaken if the following does not bid fair for it. The hypotheſis, in ſhort, is this, that all Power is directly from God, not by poſitive appointment, but, as he is pleaſed to ſignify his ſovereign Will by the nature of things, leaving it to the choice and diſcretion of people, among whom Governments are not yet eſtabliſhed, in what form, by what perſons, and on what conditions, this Power ſhall be exerciſed. The Power itſelf flows from the Will of the Creator, declared with that plainneſs and evidence, that no part of mankind can be ignorant of it. The leaſt reflection diſcovers it.

And here before I paſs any further, I muſt deſire my Reader to look back to the diſtinction juſt mentioned between a *Poſitive Appointment of God*, and the *Will of God as ſignified by the nature of things*; becauſe a little explanation of this diſtinction may be of uſe to let him more fully into my meaning. A Poſitive Appointment of God is the ſame as the Will of God, reſpecting the conduct or duty of his creatures, in ſome particular inſtance, made known to them not immediately by the light of their own Reaſon,

Reaſon, but by a ſupervening Revelation, like that we Chriſtians believe to be contained in the Books of the Old and New Teſtament. Every Injunction or Command of theſe Sacred Writings about which human Reaſon is ſilent, or which we ſhould not have come to the knowledge of but in this ſupernatural way, is a Poſitive Appointment, and, properly ſpeaking, nothing elſe.

By the nature of things I underſtand the frame and conſtitution of man, his body and his mind, and of the world about him, the various relations and circumſtances in which men are capable of being placed, together with the tendencies and effects of human actions in this variety of relations, both with regard to the agent himſelf, and to others. Whatever moral concluſion or rules of practice can be gathered from an accurate ſurvey of theſe things, the nature of things may properly be ſaid to ſignify or diſcover, and are as truly *Divine Laws*, as if they were in ſo many words and ſyllables to be found in ſome written Revelation. Why are the Doctrines and Laws that compoſe ſuch a Revelation looked on as divine, or from God, but becauſe God is the Author of that Revelation? Now that God is the Author of Nature, (or, which is the ſame, that all things receive their exiſtence and powers from God, and are by him directed and over-ruled in all the events which they

give birth to in the courſe of time) is not leſs evident than it can be ever made concerning any Revelation, that God is the author of it. And muſt not the Author of Nature be the Author of thoſe practical propoſitions that reſult from a contemplation of Nature, in the ſame propriety of ſenſe as the Author of a Revelation is the Author of all the truths which that Revelation delivers? It matters not what the ſigns are which the Supreme Being chuſes for the indications of his pleaſure, whether words or things. Have theſe ſigns one plain and determinate meaning? If ſo, the divine Will is equally manifeſt in either caſe. Whoever takes the force of this way of arguing, will without further trouble perceive the reaſon of aſſigning a Divine Original to Civil Power; provided by the nature of things, that is of mankind, and of human Society, we are ſufficiently inſtructed in the degree of Power which it is fit the Heads of Society ſhould be truſted with; which is the thing I undertake to ſhew.

Nothing is more eaſy than to aſſign the rate or meaſure of that Power which in a ſtate of nature every man is poſſeſſed of. It is exactly ſo much, and no more, as every man finds neceſſary to his own preſervation and happineſs, conſiſtently with the preſervation and happineſs of the reſt of the ſpecies. He that gave me Being did, together with that, confer a right, not only of defending,

fending, but adorning, enriching, and accommodating that Being; God cannot but design, and be well pleased with the safety and perfection of his own work. This, which, in a larger sense, may be stiled self-preservation, is plainly a natural right. But then as I and all other men had the same Author of existence, I cannot be supposed to have any right, but every other man must have the same; and consequently the preservation and well being, not of this or that, but of every man, is the end proposed by their common Maker and Lord. From whence the next inference is, That no particular person may pursue his private interest, but in such ways, and by such actions as are reconcileable with the general good of mankind. The reason is, that in any other way, and by any other actions, he must contradict the intention of his Maker; which, undoubtedly, no one can have a right to do. This alone overturns Mr. *Hobbes*'s imaginary state of nature, in which every man hath a right to every thing; the most absurd and self-repugnant notion that ever politician started, and which the parent of it would have stifled in the birth as a monstrous conception, if he had known in what to found that lawless dominion, with which he was resolved to compliment his *Leviathan*, but in a like boundless and exorbitant right of nature.

From

From a ſtate of nature, let us paſs into Civil Society, and apply what hath been ſaid of the one to the illuſtration of the other. It being firſt proved, or granted, to be the Will of the Supreme Being, that mankind ſhould incorporate themſelves into Bodies Politick (with the ſame evidence that ſelf-preſervation, as before explained, appears to be the original right of every individual) it follows, that every diſtinct Society or Body Politick hath full Power and Authority to make uſe of all thoſe methods which carry in them a likelihood of promoting its welfare, without any injury thereby offered to other Societies; all independent Societies having the ſame right to ſubſiſt and flouriſh that any one can have: which they can no otherwiſe do, than by fixing upon ſuch meaſures as are at leaſt inoffenſive to all, though advantageous, it may be, but to one or two. The man who is his own judge (as every one is, that is ſubject to no other laws but thoſe of nature) reaſons thus with himſelf. "On the faireſt "examination of the matter, I do not ap- "prehend how I ſhall ſecure myſelf but by "doing this or that; I therefore conclude "myſelf to have the permiſſion, and even "command, of God to do it." In like manner they, to whom the conduct of a Society is committed, may argue the juſtice of any Laws, or Reſolves, from their ſubſerviency to the preſervation and ſupport of that Society.

ety. The Will of God is as manifeſt in this latter caſe, as in the former, or rather more ſo, in that the welfare of a Society is of vaſtly greater importance than the fate of a ſingle man can be.

I hope by this time the Reader is fully apprized of my notion, and ſees wherein it is diſtinguiſhed from the two before mentioned; from the popular one it differs, in aſſerting God to be the immediate Donor or Fountain of Civil Power; and both from that and the Patriarchal, in this, that, when ſearching after the Will of God, it does not run back to the original, or any former ſtate of things, but only conſiders in what way the general good is beſt promoted, and by this one conſideration cuts off all other inquiries. If I have ſaid any thing of the ſtate of nature, it was not in order to deduce Civil Power from thence, but only by way of illuſtration and compariſon, and to ſhew that the preſervation and happineſs of a Political Body is the ſole foundation of Political Power, juſt as the power of the individual, out of Society, is founded in the law of ſelf-preſervation.

Here then we have a deciſive rule, here we may fix our foot; Civil Power, wherever lodged, is *Jure Divino*, and extends to the doing every thing which the good of the State requires, and no further. If the Magiſtrate advance but a ſtep beyond this, the ground

ground fails him, and he hath no foundation left to ſupport his authority. The following are ſome of the conſiderations that recommend the hypotheſis now laid down.

The manner of deriving Power from this original is intelligible to all, even thoſe of the meaneſt capacities. All muſt acknowledge it agreeable to Reaſon, that conſidering the preſent conſtitution of human nature, and circumſtances of human life, men ſhould unite together in Societies, if not exiſting in ſuch Combinations before; and that, theſe Societies once formed, the governing part of them ſhould have all that Power that can be deſired for the right ordering the affairs of the Commonwealth, and anſwering the great ends of Government: this all can ſee to be highly agreeable to Reaſon; nor need they further be told, that what is agreeable to Reaſon, is agreeable to the Will of God. Reaſon is the only univerſal interpreter of the Divine Will; whatever that ſpeaks to mankind, it ſpeaks in his name, who is the great Author and Fountain of Reaſon.

To the inquiry—Who gave the Magiſtrate his Power? The anſwer then is eaſy—That whatever makes the Magiſtrate, whether Election or Inheritance, God gives him his Power. Every one can underſtand this, who is capable of underſtanding plain Reaſon; whereas the pretended donation to *Adam* firſt, and afterwards to *Noah* and his Heirs, is liable

ble to a thouſand diſputes, which are likely to have no end but with the world: and for the other way of tracing Civil Power, to the Power every man hath in a ſtate of nature, it is more round about than this, and, by that means, leſs obvious to common view. If, for the ſatisfaction of a plain countryman, that queſtioned any Power his Governours had to enact certain Laws under ſuch and ſuch Penalties, you ſhould obſerve to him, That it is no other than what he and the other members of the Society had ſtripped themſelves of, to make a Preſent of it to the Magiſtrate, he would hardly comprehend your meaning: but now, tell him, that the Publick Good renders it neceſſary, of which, in many caſes, his Superiours are the beſt Judges, and he preſently perceives what you would be at, and is ſooner convinced that you talk Reaſon.

I am ſenſible that in our enlightened Age, and among many of my fellow ſubjects, ſuch a ſuppoſition as this—That their Governors ſtanding upon higher ground than they, may ſometimes ſee further—is hardly to be made. They ſcorn an implicit faith, and will not allow any thing to be well done of which they do not clearly diſcern the reaſon. The truth is, we are become a Nation of Politicians; every three half-penny author, or Coffee-houſe orator, is fit to be of the Privy-Council, and, if he were adviſed with, would quickly

quickly ſet matters upon a better foot. *Cineas*, in his account of the *Roman* Senate, tells his Maſter *Pyrrhus*, that it looked like an Aſſembly of Kings. Should a ſtranger come into many of our Coffee-houſes, and obſerve with what a ſolemn air and magiſterial tone the company criticize the Publick Adminiſtration, what could he imagine but that every board was filled with Stateſmen, impatient to diſplay their fine talents in the ſervice of the publick, and retrieve dying Liberty? I heartily congratulate my Country on this increaſe of wiſe heads; however, would recommend to their conſideration the following ingenious fable. The fable I borrow from *de la Motte*, the moral of it is new.

A ſhip, loaden with a whole People of Apes, was juſt come into Port, a ſort of commodity for which there was a very great demand. Our Baboon Merchants were gone into the City to advertiſe what they had to ſell, the men making merry aſhore, and none but the Apes left behind in the ſhip. Their Dean, a perſon of uncommon ſufficiency, riſing ſlow, ſpeaks to this effect — "Com-
"rades, *faith he*, I have a thought in my
"head, which may be for the general good;
"what if we took this opportunity to make
"our eſcape out of ſlavery? The occaſion is
"inviting, by all means let us improve it.
"You have been eye-witneſſes to the manner
"of governing the winds and waves; let
"our

" our firſt eſſay be this maſter-piece of art, " I will be the pilot, and you ſhall be the " Mariners." " A lucky contrivance! *cry'd* " *the whole Aſſembly*, let us about it imme- " diately. Liberty! Liberty!" In the inſtant you might have ſeen the ſhip under ſail, and ſcudding along before the wind; it was pleaſant enough to obſerve the buſy croud running from yard to yard, and climbing up the maſts; while the old Ape, placing himſelf at the helm, affected the grimace of a thoughtful Pilot. By his gravity you would have taken him for another *Cato:* " Meſ- " ſieurs, *faith he*, there's a ſtorm coming, " the clouds yonder hang low, and the face " of the deep looks black and frowning; I " doubt we ſhall have but an ill time on't, " however do not be diſcouraged." He was right enough as to the ſtorm, but for what he hinted of his art, it was a different caſe. In a moment the winds let looſe their rage, and the thunders ratling about their ears, put the poor crew in a terrible fright to think there was but a finger's breadth or two between them and death. Yet, what they had formerly ſeen the ſeamen do in a like diſtreſs, they attempted to imitate; but ſhewed themſelves to be errant bunglers at the trade. Should the ſails be lowered; they do the quite contrary; inſtead of avoiding the rocks, they run directly upon them. To what purpoſe is all their blind induſtry? The veſſel ſtrikes,

ſtrikes, breaks to pieces before their eyes, and the whole colony of ſimpletons ſinks at once in the abyſs.

You Apes of Politicians! See here what the fate of the ſhip would be, if left to your management! The firſt ſtorm that happened, there would be an end of your Art and You.

LETTER III.

Of the Origin and Extent of CIVIL POWER.

THAT Political Power is from God, in oppoſition to thoſe who ſuppoſe it to be a gift of the People; and that it is from him, not by way of poſitive donation to the firſt man from whom it is tranſmitted in the manner of an inheritance to his poſterity, but as declaring his Will by the nature of things, ſo that the Publick Good is the rule by which we are to judge of the Divine Will and of Civil Power; hath been ſhewn in a former Paper. I then propoſed to offer ſome conſiderations in favour of this opinion. One of which I have mentioned already. I ſhall now add ſome others.

In what way Civil Polities had their riſe, is a queſtion of fact, not more obſcure than needleſs upon the preſent hypotheſis. For, however decided, or if not decided at all, it makes no odds in this caſe. Let thoſe that have leiſure and inclination continue to

diſpute — Whether men were ever in a ſtate of nature, and by common conſultation and agreement exchanged that for a Political State; or Magiſtracy roſe inſenſibly out of Paternal Dominion, following the order of Primogeniture, ſo that mankind were always born under Government —— Let them, I ſay, diſpute whether either, or both of theſe, or any other way, ought to be pitched on for the firſt formation of Societies; and after all, let them agree or differ upon the point, it is certain and demonſtrable, that every Society hath a right to preſerve itſelf, and ſo much Power inherent in it as ſerves to this end, and no more. Which leads me to another obſervation.

That the bounds of Sovereign Power, and the ſubmiſſion to be paid to it, are better aſcertained and marked out by the help of this than of either of the other ſchemes. Suppoſing, for argument's ſake, ſuch a grant to the firſt Parent of mankind as ſome contend for, it was either unlimited, or reſtrained. If the Power beſtowed was unlimited, it lies upon them who ſay ſo, to prove their aſſertion, and to prove it too by the moſt convincing arguments; ſince mankind are too tenacious of their Liberties to ſurrender them up without being compelled to it either by external force, or irreſiſtable reaſons. Now, for any ſuch reaſons, I deſpair of ever ſeeing them,

them, and they muſt be violently attached to an opinion, who fancy, that any, yet produced, are of this kind. If the grant had any reſtrictions added to it, we muſt beg their aſſiſtance in diſcovering what they are, ſince they have too much contempt for our Sovereign Lords the People, to give us leave to eſtimate the Supreme Power by what is beneficial for them.

The Power accompanying the ſuppoſed ſtate of nature cannot be a juſt ſtandard of the Civil Power, for this reaſon, that it is notorious, theſe two have not always the ſame limits, but are each of them, in different inſtances, more extenſive than the other; which proceeds from hence, that to the preſervation of a Society more Power is ſometimes neceſſary than to the preſervation of the individual, at other times leſs. Out of Society, the ſevereſt puniſhment of a ſmall injury may, in ſome circumſtances, be juſtifiable, becauſe neceſſary to prevent a greater; while, in Society, where ſufficient caution may be taken without going to ſuch extremities, the ſame may be unreaſonable. Here the Power of the individual exceeds that of the Society. But, in moſt caſes, it is the reverſe of this, and the authority of Civil Governments reaches to many things not within the compaſs of a private Power. That man would uſurp a Power that did not belong to him, who, in a ſtate of diſunion and

independance, ſhould take upon him to puniſh Drunkenneſs, idle and riotous Living, Swearing, Gaming, Whoredom between perſons at their own diſpoſal, *&c.* all which, notwithſtanding, have been puniſhed by the Laws of ſeveral States, and that juſtly too, becauſe of the ill influence theſe, and ſuch like vices, have upon the peace and good order of Society. And as in ſome caſes, vices, not puniſhable in a ſtate of nature, may be cognizable in Society, ſo in others the penalty may be aggravated and enlarged.

It would be hard to prove that, in a ſtate of nature, the Children may be made to ſuffer in any degree or reſpect, that is avoidable, for the miſbehaviour of their Parents; and yet we know this is practiſed in many parts of the world, where, for Treaſon, the Children of the Delinquent are deprived of their inheritance, and have ſometimes been declared incapable of all future honours. It is enough to warrant any ſuch Penalties, if it can be ſhewn that the Publick Good renders them expedient. Purſue the ſame principle, and you will be obliged to own that the Supreme Power can never be abſolute, or of ſuch a nature that, however exerted, though to the deſtruction of the lives and properties of the Subject, the Subject hath no other remedy permitted him but patience. Civil Power is unavoidably confined within certain bounds; it cannot riſe above its fountain,

tain, the general good. So that, unleſs it could be made to appear, that it is more for the benefit of States and Kingdoms to be under Deſpotick Rule, than to have a Liberty, in extreme caſes, of appealing to force, ſuch an appeal, in ſuch caſes, muſt be allowed them, or, without being allowed will very warrantably be taken. Now, if they pleaſe, we will venture it upon this iſſue, and according as after a juſt compariſon from hiſtory and experience, we find free men or ſlaves to be in the happier condition, will decide in favour of Reſiſtance or Non-Reſiſtance. A regard to one's Country ought to be ſuperiour to all private and particular obligations; from this muſt flow the reſpect and obedience due to Princes themſelves; for upon ſuppoſition Societies might do better without Government than with it, this ſubordination among mankind, of many to a few, ought, as ſoon as poſſible, to be aboliſhed.

This obſervation may ſatisfy all but thoſe who are reſolved not to be ſatisfied, that *Paſſive Obedience*, in all caſes whatſoever, is very unlikely to be a doctrine belonging to Revelation; ſo very unlikely, that it ought not to be received for ſuch, unleſs frequently delivered, in the moſt expreſs terms, and thoſe too not capable of any other reaſonable conſtruction. Revealed Religion is built upon Natural; no wiſe and conſiderate man there-

fore will be in haſte to give the character of *Divine* to any doctrine that inverts the order of natural duties, as this of Abſolute Power manifeſtly does, ſubjecting the greater to the leſs, the whole to an inconſiderable part, the end to the means. The Prince is but one of many thouſands or millions, his pleaſure of ſmall moment, in compariſon of the intereſt of the Commonwealth, and his Authority deſigned only as a means of ſecuring the general tranquility. All that *Chriſtianity* does, is to enforce the obligations which, by virtue of the relations they ſtand in to each other, men were before under. Yet (which ought to be carefully remarked) Authority and Submiſſion are not ſuch exact tallys to one another, but that where the Sovereign goes beyond the bounds of his Authority, the Subject may be obliged to follow him with his Submiſſion; the common good being the invariable rule to both.

It is not every ſuppoſed or even real grievance that will juſtify Faction and Mutiny, much leſs change Rebellion into lawful Reſiſtance. If the ground of complaint be a misfortune rather than a fault, ariſing from an unuſual complication of cauſes, and the contingency of human affairs, this want of foreſight may well be forgiven to any Adminiſtration; nor ſhould that charity be denied to the Truſtees of the Commonwealth, which every

every private man, that means well and is unfortunate, may challenge. Where the error is leſs excuſable, yet not obſtinately defended or repeated, it ſhould be generouſly forgotten. Yea, though the miſmanagements are more numerous, of wider extent, and more pernicious influence, ſtill, if they are not in eſſential points, if they are ſufferable, if having recourſe to violent remedies will endanger the life of the State more than leaving it to time and the conſtitution to repel the venom of the diſeaſe, it cannot be made a controverſy what every man ſhould, and what every honeſt man will eſteem his duty in this ſituation. Further,

This accounts for thoſe extraordinary ſteps which a Government is ſometimes neceſſitated to take in compliance with ſudden emergencies, which could not be foreſeen, or not ſo well guarded againſt. It is not indeed fit that certain caſes ſhould be put by way of ſuppoſition beforehand, becauſe it is to be hoped they will never happen, or when they do, they will ſufficiently explain themſelves. The Conſtitution is a ſacred thing: Agreed; and therefore, ſay you, not to be deviated from in the minuteſt particular; rather, ſay I, ought to be made free with in ſome junctures by thoſe that have a love for it, and would ſave it from ruin, or from the evident danger of it. Our veneration ought not to

be for names but things. It is not in the choice of any Society, or the Legiſlators and Repreſentatives of it, ſo to tie up their hands by any Acts and Settlements of their own, that it ſhall be for ever after unlawful to break through them for the ſake of the publick ſafety. *Salus Populi ſuprema Lex eſto.* This is a Divine Law, by which all other, merely human, Laws are to be controlled, qualified, or interpreted.

The *Athenians*, on a certain time, lodged a thouſand talents in the Citadel, making it criminal to propoſe or order the imploying this money on any other occaſion but the repelling of an hoſtile fleet, that ſhould attempt a deſcent upon their coaſts; which notwithſtanding, they themſelves, alarmed at the revolt of the inhabitants of *Chios*, did not ſcruple to revoke this Decree. And does any one imagine they were herein to blame? But then the neceſſity of the caſe ought to be very apparent, that there may be no handle given for drawing what is done into precedent, when there is no ſuch neceſſity; a thing of the moſt dangerous conſequence. Such a neceſſity, I ſhould think, all the well-wiſhers to the preſent happy Eſtabliſhment, and the Liberties of their Country, muſt acknowledge to have been for the *Septennial Act.* The continuance of it unrepealed, whether adviſeable or not, I meddle not with, but leave

leave it to the wiſdom of the preſent Parliament, when it ſhall ſit, to determine the matter; not precluding others, that are better able, from giving their opinion, which they may do and welcome, provided their zeal or confidence of being in the right, does not make them forget their duty.

There was a Law among the antient *Britons*, that no one ſhould ſpeak of the Common-wealth, and of publick affairs but in Council or Parliament; this was certainly carrying the matter too far. Every man ought to have the privilege of a freeborn Subject, to ſpeak his mind, not forgetting, however, that he ought not to obtrude his advice upon thoſe that do not want it, and ſhould keep within the bounds of decency; in which, I muſt needs ſay, many of our modern Dealers in Politicks, and particularly ſome of the *Journaliſts*, ſeem to me to have been ſhamefully wanting; who, if one were to gueſs at the quality of the men by that of their Writings, muſt be deemed to be of the loweſt of the People, and as great ſtrangers to good breeding, as all of them are to good temper, and ſome of them to good ſenſe. To add no more.

The character of the Magiſtrate is more ſtrongly fenced, and guarded by this notion, than by the popular one. His Authority is more viſibly divine, his Perſon more venerable,

ble, and the Conſcience of the Subject held under greater awe. His Subjects may nominate him, and they do no more; heaven delivers the enſigns of Power and Sword of Juſtice, into his hand, and clothes him with Imperial Dignity. When men are taught to look not only upon the Magiſtrate, but upon Magiſtracy as their Creature, and to believe that their Princes and Rulers have no Power but what they have graciouſly given them, the more unthinking ſort will be apt, upon the leaſt reſentment, to treat them with very little ceremony; like thoſe wiſe people, that firſt make their Gods, and then, if they are ſullen, and will not gratify them in every requeſt, from prayers fall to menaces, and from menaces to rougher methods, in hopes they ſhall either beat or fright them into a better humour. So we are told the Votaries of a certain Saint did lately; whom, becauſe it happened to rain at the time they were carrying him in Proceſſion, to procure dry weather, they very civilly threw him into the river. The guilt of Rebellion, will, by ſuch, be thought to amount to no more than a breach of promiſe. The Scripture ſtyle, according to which the Magiſtrate *is the Miniſter of God for good*, does much more clearly point out the ground of thoſe duties which Scripture and Reaſon do jointly command; ſuch as not ſpeaking evil of Dignities, obeying

ing Magiſtrates, being ſubject to the Higher Powers, not only for Wrath, but Conſcience-ſake; becauſe *the Powers that be, are ordained of God; and whoſoever reſiſteth the Power, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God, and ſhall receive to himſelf damnation.*

LETTER IV.

A Defence of the LIBERTY *of the* WILL.

SIR,

THE Author of the *Britiſh Journal* will, I hope, forgive me, when I declare myſelf to have had ſo little curioſity to know the ſubject of his Papers, that, to this moment, I ſhould hardly have looked into them, if, by accident, I had not underſtood that, inſtead of *Cato* with his Politicks, *Diogenes* had of late been reading Lectures of Philoſophy from his Tub, and inſtructing the Publick in a point, about which, if his notion be right, it were much better for mankind to continue ignorant and miſtaken. That man is a mere machine, and all his actions, good and bad, wiſe and fooliſh, fatally determined, I always thought a moſt extravagant aſſertion, and ſhould have been ſurprized to hear it from any but men who have been too long at war with common ſenſe, to leave us room to wonder at any contradiction or abſurdity, however groſs, which they ſhall think fit to eſpouſe.

The

The first reflection this occasioned was on the odd jumble which the ideas of Political Liberty and Moral Necessity make in the heads and writings of these men. Freedom is a most glorious thing in the Commonwealth, the natural right of mankind, who cannot be too jealous of it, nor go too far in securing it; in human actions Freedom is a chimera, an impossibility: but, if this be truth, why so angry with those above you for not managing affairs to your liking, since they themselves are as very slaves as you can be, and all their motions, like those of other parcels of matter, are according to the force impressed, and in the same direction? In truth, following this scheme of things, the parallel is but too obvious between Almighty God and the Master of a Puppet-Show. This latter, from the despotick power he hath over his little people, makes them agree or differ, act now one part, immediately after a quite contrary, just as he pleases. For example, we will suppose him to entertain his customers with the representation of a Government distressed by factions and popular discontents. The sage Monarch sustains his character so well, as to merit the title of the Father of his Country; his Ministers are wakeful for the Publick Good, and equal to their respective posts, notwithstanding which, whispers are spread among the crowd of they know not what imaginary griev-

grievances; the *T—s*, the *H—s* and the whole tribe of Demagogues fill up the cry of Male-Adminiſtration; and at the ſame time that they are thus opening againſt the State, ſome from among themſelves ſtart up, and very wiſely obſerve that they are all, from the King to the Cobler, but a company of wooden heads pulled this way or that, at the diſcretion of the man behind the curtain: however, that it is even beyond the patience of a piece of timber to bear ſuch inſults and provocations as they have met with. Tell me now, wherein the affairs of mankind, their Wars, their Treaties and Negotiations, their Intrigues and Conſpiracies differ, as to the main, from this ludicrous and fantaſtick ſcene: and what we muſt think of that Being, who, for his diverſion, brings us on the ſtage, and idly plays us one againſt the other.

I next conſidered with myſelf what valuable end our Tub-Philoſopher could propoſe in writing after this manner, and whence his zeal for ſuch an ill-favoured doctrine. It muſt certainly be of the laſt importance to mankind, a uſeful diſcovery, and adapted to ſerve the intereſts of Religion and Virtue. And, if this be the caſe, it is pity it ſhould remain a ſecret. But, that we may not be too credulous, let us make a little trial of it. Here is a man ſtrongly tempted to play the knave; but, believing himſelf maſter of his

his own actions, and answerable for them, he is secretly restrained thro' shame of the foulness of the crime, or fear of its consequences, in an after-life. Whether he be free, or no, matters not. He imagines that he is free, and shall deserve blame and punishment, if he does any thing injurious to his fellow-creatures, or dishonourable to his Maker; and by this thought he is awed, and kept within some bounds. This is Conscience; a persuasion of the natural and intrinsick differences of good and evil, and of our own liberty to chuse one or the other: which inward persuasion fills the mind with joy or sorrow, hope or fear, confidence or shame, according as we apprehend ourselves to have made a right or a wrong use of our freedom in observing or neglecting these essential and everlasting differences of things.

Let us now put the supposition, the other way, of a person in the same circumstances as the former, but not under the same restraint. Is he hired to write a Libel, or commit a Murder? He esteems himself as, properly, no more chargeable with these actions than the Pen or the Sword he imploys in them. He directs these, while he himself is directed by a higher hand. He is but the *Amanuensis* or executioner of Fate. As long as he hath this view of the case, what is there left to be a check upon his inclinations? What room for Conscience to terrify

or

or reproach him? With this apology at hand, will he not readily follow appetite and paſſion, where it can be done with ſafety, and execute whatever a preſent intereſt ſhall dictate? *Cato* had deſcribed mankind as a race of low, ſelfiſh and miſchievous beings, void of all principles of Conſcience or Honour. After him comes *Diogenes*, and gravely tells them that a knave can no more help being what he is, than a fool; the expreſſion of *a natural rogue* being altogether as proper as of *a natural fool*, tho' not quite ſo common. And is not Society extremely obliged to this claſs of Writers, and in a likely way to flouriſh upon their principles?

But, that the Letter-Writer may not think I am beging quarter for an opinion which I deſpair of defending, I ſhall now proceed to give him one reaſon, among many, why I believe man to be a free agent, and poſſeſſed of a ſelf-determining power. He himſelf allows of a ſupreme and ſelf-exiſtent Being, perfectly juſt, and wiſe, and good, the Maker and Governour of the world. Now upon this ſingle conceſſion I undertake to demonſtrate the liberty of human actions. That mankind act irregularly in a thouſand inſtances, or ſo as to violate the Laws of Reaſon, Religion, and the Civil Society, is a matter of fact, not to be diſputed; the only queſtion is—Whether they can avoid acting thus? Grant me that they can, and I have

have gained my point, ſince they will then do what they have a power to forbear. Deny it, and you are obliged to hold that the firſt Cauſe is the ſource or origin of all evil, *i. e.* that ſin and folly are the neceſſary productions of infinite goodneſs and wiſdom; which is a manifeſt contradiction.

" The whole ſyſtem of the univerſe (ſays " this Writer) is the care of God, and all " other inferior beings muſt be ſubordinate " to the intereſt of this great one, and all " contribute in their ſeveral ſtations and " actions to bring about at laſt the grand " purpoſes of his Providence." But will he pretend to ſay that Lying, Fraud, Intemperance, Inhumanity, Oppreſſion, and the like practices, have in their nature a tendency to promote the good of intelligent beings; and cannot therefore in the order of cauſes be diſpenſed with by him who guides the whole deſign? This were to make theſe things good, and not evil. Or will any one contend that particular Societies, and conſequently the general ſyſtem which comprehends them all, would not injoy more harmony and peace, if they that compoſe them were univerſally juſt, temperate, grateful, kind, and beneficent? And why then are they not all theſe, but too often the direct contrary? The common anſwer, that man being at preſent in a ſtate of trial for the happineſs of a future life, is therefore left to

his liberty to do good or evil, is a plain and rational ſolution of the difficulty; whereas the opinion that men are inevitably betrayed into all theſe miſchiefs by a concatenation of cauſes, overthrows at once the idea of an Eternal Mind and of Moral Perfections, eſtabliſhing in their ſtead a blind unintelligent Matter as the original of all things.

Did we ſee a regularity and conſiſtency in the actions of rational creatures, were they all uniformly virtuous, conducted by Reaſon, and leveled at one certain end, the common intereſt and welfare of the whole, there might be then ſome little colour for doubt, whether they were not under a *neceſſity*, like that which retains the heavenly bodies in their ſeveral courſes, which they perform with an amazing order and conſtancy, one age after another. But, for certain, wiſdom cannot be the ſpring of an unequal, freakiſh and contradictory conduct; the fountain of all good can never neceſſitate his creatures to do evil. Nor muſt you think to eſcape by ſaying, that God himſelf is a neceſſary agent, that he could not but create man with an invincible biaſs to tranſgreſs his laws, and cannot but puniſh him for tranſgreſſing them, tho' without any fault of his. For whence ſhould this *neceſſity* ariſe? Not from any thing without him, becauſe he would not then be the firſt and independent Being; not from his own nature, which, containing in itſelf the moſt

moſt perfect wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs, cannot, without the moſt evident abſurdity, be ſuppoſed to force him to act in direct oppoſition to all theſe Perfections. " Almighty " God, in compaſſion to mankind, hath an- " nexed Rewards and Puniſhments to the " obſervance or non-obſervance of his Laws." Here let me aſk, Whether he hath done this with a deſign they ſhould be ſufficient to operate upon all, or on thoſe only whom they actually influence? If on all, they are all free; if only on ſome, they for whom they were never intended can have no concern in them. Who then are the perſons to be puniſhed?

I ſhall conclude with obſerving that there is ſuch a natural conviction in the minds of men of this truth, that *Epicurus* himſelf, tho' by his principles obliged to deny the Freedom of the Will, was not yet hardy enough to do it, but in order to reconcile it with his Law of Gravity, invented a Motion of Declination for his Atoms; which, if allowed him, hath juſt as much to do with Liberty, as the idea of a Triangle with a good Dinner. I am,

SIR,

Your Obliged Humble Servant.

LETTER V.

On the IMMORTALITY *of the* SOUL.

THERE are perſons ſo unhappily formed, as to be at the ſame time extremely ſceptical and the moſt credulous of mankind. Their pretence for not believing ſome things, is, that they cannot comprehend them; and yet they can, without difficulty, ſwallow others that are a thouſand times more incomprehenſible than thoſe they reject: they laugh at *myſteries* in Religion, and would think it a reproach to their underſtandings to ſubmit to them; but in what favours their corrupt paſſions and deſigns, their preconceived opinions and irregular inclinations, *myſterioufneſs* is ſo far from an objection, that contradiction to the common notions of mens minds is none; and they will believe not only without evidence, but even in defiance of it. As for inſtance, that the human Soul is a ſyſtem of Matter, and that all its thoughts, volitions, reaſonings, doubts and fears, reſult from the action and reaction of the particles of this ſyſtem. Our *Britiſh Diogenes* is among thoſe,

thoſe, who, as if confederated in a deſign againſt the Soul of man, labour hard to degrade it from its dignity to a level with the clay it animates; and, when made by God in his own image, and but a little lower than the angels, would fain argue it into a likeneſs to ſtocks and ſtones, the deities worſhipped by the heathens. Vain attempt! Conſcious to her ſuperiour nature, the Soul mocks their feeble efforts, and dares meet their keeneſt arguments with as little fear as an angel would diſcover in the midſt of a battle.

The Soul, ſecur'd in her exiſtence, ſmiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.

But, in truth, it is too great a compliment to the objections of theſe men, to reſemble them to ſuch weapons, when they have neither point nor edge in them, and are more like arrows with leaden heads, and thrown by a weak hand, that either reach not home, or ſtrike with a dead ſound againſt the ſhield, and then fall off without doing the leaſt execution. If any thing could tempt me to doubt of the Soul's Immortality, the confuſion and incoherence of this Writer's reaſonings would much ſooner do it than the ſtrength of them, there being in the former of theſe ſomething very like what we might expect from the fortuitous colliſion of blind

and wandering atoms. His Diſcourſe, I own, bids as fair to be the work of *Chance* as moſt I have ſeen: however having in it ſome glimmerings of Reaſon, and faint traces of thought and meaning, I am convinced that it muſt have proceeded from a nobler cauſe.

Our *Cynick* tells his Coffee-houſe Readers, to their great edification, that Matter thinks; that is, is capable of various ſenſations and reflections. But if he can ſuffer a civil queſtion, I would aſk him, By what is this operation of Thinking produced? He will not ſay by a difference of magnitude; ſince the ſmalleſt particles are of the ſame nature, and have the ſame common properties with the greateſt, as is plain from this ſingle conſideration, that the greateſt are made up of the ſmalleſt: for upon dividing a greater and a ſmaller maſs into equal parts, the greater will appear to have more ſuch parts than the ſmaller, and this is all that will follow. Is it by a difference of figure? Not ſo neither. For figure is nothing elſe but a certain relation of the parts of Matter one to the other; ſo that if Thinking conſiſts in figure (or, if you will, organization, which is no other than a proper configuration and ſtructure of the conſtituent parts of bodies) it will be nothing abſolute, but a mere external denomination. Whether a quantity of Matter exiſts under a ſpherical, a cubical, or any other ſurface, the difference will be of

of juſt the ſame kind as that which ariſes from the various artful figures of a Dance, or the ſeveral ways of drawing up an Army; in the two latter of which caſes the perſons are manifeſtly the very ſame, neither wiſer, nor ſtronger, nor more virtuous, as the Matter muſt needs be in the firſt; nothing new emerges from ever ſo many ſhiftings and changes of this ſort.

Shall we then have recourſe to Motion for the performance of theſe wonderful feats, no leſs ſtrange than Tranſubſtantiation, and of the ſame ſize of poſſibility? This ſeems to be what *Cato*'s Second is moſt inclined to. "When the Actions of exterior bodies ſtrike "upon the organs of ſenſe, they muſt cauſe "a ſecond Action or Motion, and continue "it *in Infinitum*, unleſs it meets obſtruction. "This firſt Action cauſes Senſation, and the "ſecond Reflection, *&c.* Again, this Action "is called by different names, as it affects "the different parts of the machine: when it "affects the eye, it is called ſeeing, the ear "hearing, the palate taſting, the noſe ſmelling; "but when the motion is continued further, "and gets to the brain, or other internal "part of the ſyſtem, it cauſes that effect "which we call Thinking." All this I ſhall acknowledge to be very intelligible, when I can conceive that a ſet of organ pipes are raviſhed with their own muſick, a painting room is agreeably entertained with the fine pieces hung up in it, or that a pin-cuſhion

feels moſt tormenting pains upon its being ſtuck full of pins.

I ſhall not ſtop to take notice of ſome peculiar elegancies, in our Author's ſtyle, as, *an action ſtriking*, *i. e.* an action acting; *the ſenſation of vegetables*, and the like; but ſhall immediately proceed to examine what we can extract from the idea of Motion. The capacity of being moved, which is all that Matter can challenge, is a paſſive quality, and proceeds from a defect of Being and Power. A body is therefore moveable, becauſe it is of a limited extenſion; that is, does not at once poſſeſs all ſpace, nor, containing only a finite quantity of Matter, can make infinite reſiſtance; upon which account it muſt yield to a force ſufficient to overcome its reſiſtence, and be thruſt out of one place into another: conſequently, the leſs the quantity of Matter in any body, *cæteris paribus*, the more eaſily is that body moved, becauſe leſs capable of ſtanding againſt the impulſe of other bodies. And what ſimilitude can we trace in all this to Thinking, which is an active principle, the higheſt excellency and perfection, and that from whence all the Moral Attributes of the Deity derive their original? The Deity, being immenſe, is immoveable; but not incogitative. In God, therefore, Cogitation is neither Motion, nor the effect of Motion; and is it not evident, that Cogitation, Perception, or Conſciouſneſs, muſt be of the ſame

ſame general nature, in whatever Being it is found? For certain, it is not Motion in one Being, and in another ſomething which hath not the leaſt affinity to Motion.

It is further undeniable, that the Motion of bodies is only a ſucceſſive application of their parts to different parts of ſpace; which parts of ſpace being perfectly uniform and alike, all the poſſibilities of Motion can never occaſion the leaſt alteration in the abſolute natures and properties of things. Let a ſyſtem of Matter be carried in any direction, and with any degree of velocity, its parts continuing relatively at reſt, every body apprehends that it will acquire nothing by the career. Nor is the caſe a whit mended by changing the ſuppoſition, and imagining the parts in Motion among themſelves; for here every diſtinct particle muſt be conſidered as a whole, and the very ſame obſervation will hold concerning the parts that was before made of the whole collection: they will remain unalterably the ſame; and tho' the whole may ſeem to paſs under a change, yet that change is, in reality, no more than a different juxta-poſition of the parts. Beſides which, we might venture to appeal to every one who attends to the operations of his mind, when he deſires, deliberates, reſolves, feels pleaſure or pain, whether this inward conſciouſneſs or knowledge have any thing in it agreeing with the tranſ-

lation

lation of a body, or of a ſingle particle, from place to place, which is all that is meant by Motion. He that ſees any great reſemblance between theſe things, or does not ſee a wide difference between them, muſt have a much quicker or duller apprehenſion than is common to mankind.

But may not Motion be the cauſe of Thought? The occaſional cauſe of divers modes of Thinking, I grant it may be; but not the proper cauſe of Thought itſelf, till colour is known to produce ſound, and things entirely diſſimilar ſhall naturally give birth to one another. The uſual ſubterfuge of the Materialiſt, when driven from this hold, is, that we do not know all the hidden powers of Matter, nor the qualities that may ſpring from the endleſs combinations of which Matter is capable. I hope I ſhall never be backward to confeſs my ignorance both of Nature, and the God of it; yet I take leave to ſay, that Thinking cannot be a power belonging to Matter, unleſs it belongs to it originally and univerſally, *i. e.* unleſs it be an eſſential power: my reaſon is, that by all the transformations of bodies and ſhufflings of atoms, it is demonſtrable, not a ſingle power of an abſolute and generical nature is ſuperadded to the material maſs. There is, it is true, an unexhauſted variety of figures, magnitudes, and motions, and, by means of theſe, of mechanical operations and effects: but, in regard

regard all these are only so modes of the original attributes, or positions of bodies, or the parts of bodies with respect to each other; here is nothing answering to Thought, which is not a mere relation of things, or mode of some more extensive quality, but an inherent and primary attribute.

The sum is, Matter is immutably and eternally the same, of which I desire no better illustration than what *Diogenes* himself supplies me with, though brought by him to a quite contrary purpose. "Two Dice afford "six times as many chances as one, and three "as two." Very true, but let the number of chances keep increasing to infinity, the Dice continue as they were, and so likewise the Spots they are marked with, which soever of them happen to turn upwards. So, notwithstanding an incredible number of Words may be formed out of four and twenty Letters, the Letters gain nothing at all by it; nor have these Letters or Words more sense and thought in one situation than in any other: Institution and Custom have indeed arbitrarily made them the signs of our thoughts. And, which deserves to be remarked, what Institution is in regard to Words, the Laws of Union, established by the Creator, are in reference to Sensations; there being in the nature and reason of things no more discoverable connection between the actions of the parti-

particles of Matter, variouſly figured and moved, upon the organs of ſenſe, and the perceptions conſequent on theſe actions, than between the ſounds and figures of Words, and the meaning which mankind are agreed they ſhall convey. And where now is the ridiculouſneſs of uſing the word *Spirit*, tho' we have no clear and poſitive idea of Immaterial Subſtance? Not to take notice that we have as clear an idea of *Spirit* as of *Body*, neither of which is knowable but by its properties, it is enough that we can prove Thinking to be no Property of Matter; from whence it neceſſarily follows, that the Thinking Principle is Immaterial. When it is ſaid of God, *that he is a Spirit*, can the meaning be any other than that he is a pure incorporeal Mind? And if there be one Immaterial Being in the univerſe, there can be nothing contradictory or ridiculous in the ſuppoſition of more. It is, on the contrary, moſt natural to conceive, that whatever Being reſembles God in the faculties of Underſtanding and Will, is further like him in the Immateriality of his Eſſence.

The Reader may obſerve, I have taken it for granted, that Thought is not eſſential to Matter, and that the Divine Being is Immaterial and Immenſe; not, I can aſſure Mr. *Dio-*

Diogenes, from any apprehenſion I have of the difficulty of demonſtrating theſe things, but as charitably ſuppoſing he is not yet ſo forſaken of all Reaſon as to deny them: when he ſhall do this, it will be time enough to ſet about the proof of them.

POEMS
ON
SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

POEMS
ON
SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

To Mr. WATTS,
On his Divine POEMS.

SAY, human Seraph, whence that charming force,
That flame, that ſoul, which animates each line;
And how it runs with ſuch a graceful eaſe,
Loaded with pond'rous ſenſe! Say, did not He
The lovely JESUS, who commands thy breaſt,
Inſpire thee with himſelf? With JESUS dwells,
Knit in myſterious bands, the *Paraclete*,
The breath of GOD, the everlaſting ſource
Of Love: And what is Love in ſouls like thine,
But Air, and Incenſe to the Poet's fire?
Should an expiring Saint, whoſe ſwimming eyes

Mingle the images of things about him,
But hear the leaſt exalted of thy ſtrains,
How greedily he'd drink the muſick in,
Thinking his heav'nly Convoy waited near!
So great a ſtreſs of powerful harmony,
Nature unable longer to ſuſtain,
Would ſink oppreſt with joy to endleſs reſt.

Let none henceforth of Providence complain,
As if the world of ſpirits lay unknown,
Fenc'd round with black impenetrable night;
What tho' no ſhining angel darts from thence
With leave to publiſh things conceal'd from ſenſe,
In language bright as theirs, we here are told,
When life its narrow round of years hath roll'd,
What 'tis imploys the bleſs'd, what makes their bliſs;
Songs ſuch as WATTS's are, and Love like his.

But then, dear Sir, be cautious how you uſe
To tranſports ſo intenſely rais'd your Muſe,
Leſt, whilſt th' ecſtatic impulſe you obey,
The ſoul leap out, and drop the duller clay.

Sept. 4.
1706.

To Mrs. ROWE,

On her Excellent POEMS.

TEACH me the art, fair regent of the soul,
To raise the passions, or at will, controul;
That heav'nly art, which can our cares beguile,
Make envy pleas'd, and pensive sorrow smile.
Circe with magick spells the soul could bind,
And change the shape; here the reverse we find;
The brute, transform'd by you, assumes a nobler kind.
O had I but thy voice, and skill, and lyre!
Soon would I set the listening Swains on fire.
Virtue's majestick form before their eyes,
Her lovely train, her palace in the skies,
And high refulgent throne, should stand confest,
And with aspiring wishes swell each breast.
The tenants of the grove, a tuneful throng,
Should cease their lays, to hear my sweeter song;
Thy self too, transports feel, before unknown,
And in *another*, praise what was thine *own*:
Else the too modest Nymph will ne'er believe,
How soft the strains, the joys how vast they give.

But while th' admiring audience ſit around,
And faint beneath the rapture of the ſound,
Calm and unaw'd ſhe will her ſelf appear,
And think we flatter what we ſcarce can bear.

Fond wiſhes theſe! To think ſhe would impart
Heav'n's inſpirations, like the rules of art;
Or truſt to any mean, unſkilful hand,
(The ſpeaking ſtrings that knows not to command)
The golden gift, a welcome preſent made
By *Gabriel*; who with grace celeſtial ſaid,
" Hail, thou of heav'n belov'd! This harp is thine
" So often ſat to hymns and airs divine;
" Still let it ſacred be to Praiſe and Love;
" 'Twill kindle ardors pure as ours above,
" Aſſiſt thy riſing ſoul, and bear her flight
" Beyond the rolling ſpheres, to realms of endleſs light:
" Morning and Ev'ning let me meet thee there."
No more he ſpoke—but mix'd unſeen with air.

A Thought

A Thought on DEATH.

O *Death!* What pow'r is thine, that diſtant, thus,
By fancy ſeen, thou call'ſt up all our fears,
And ſhed'ſt a baleful influence on the ſoul!
Mine hangs her drooping wings, and, downward preſs'd
By foggy damps, attempts in vain to riſe;
For ſtill in ken of an untimely grave,
The daily ſubject of the penſive thought,
She hovers o'er, and views the ſad receſs.
If (which is ſeldom) I converſe with joy,
And nature, lighten'd of her ſorrows, ſmiles,
While pleaſing objects dance before the ſight,
A thought of *Death* comes croſs the lovely ſcene,
And blots it out at once: So have I known
The riſing Sun dart round his golden beams,
The welcome promiſe of a glorious Day;
When, lo, ſcarce have we felt his vital lamp,
But ſtrait ſome ſullen cloud hangs threat'ning o'er;
We ſicken, the creation ſeems to mourn,
And all things wear a deep and heavy gloom.

A HYMN on SIGHT.

I.

I Bleſs my God for ev'ry ſenſe,
But moſt for thee, my darling Sight,
By whom I learn t' adore the pow'r
That won this beautious world from Night.

II.

When thou art not, the glorious ſcene
In darkneſs undiſtinguiſh'd lies,
Heav'n, Earth, and Seas are all in vain,
Nor can their wonders move ſurprize.

III.

Ev'n light, of all material things
Beſt emblem of the Deity,
Spreads to the blind unheeded charms;
For why? 'Twas made alone for thee.

IV.

Thou awful fears, and thoughts ſublime,
Doſt to the raviſhed mind convey,
Of him, who rais'd this ample Frame,
And o'er the whole extends his ſway.

V.

With pleaſure now I travel o'er
Heav'ns vaſt extent; amaz'd to ſee
Numberleſs worlds in order roll
With rapid motion thro' the ſky.

VI. Infi-

VI.

Infinite pow'er, and equal ſkill
In all thy works, O Lord, I view;
Thy breath firſt kindled up theſe fires,
And thou their waſtes doſt ſtill renew.

VII.

The Sun's bright orb thy glory fills,
The nightly Moon reflects the ſame,
And all the ſtarry globes diffuſe,
With their own light, their Maker's name.

VIII.

But ah, how ſoon my light is loſt,
Hopeleſs to reach the bounds of place!
Yet where that fails, by fancy's aid,
Remoter regions I can trace.

IX.

'Till, got within the verge of Stars,
Earth's little ball eſcapes my ken;
The more I wonder thy delight,
O God, is with the ſons of men!

On the DEATH *of a* YOUTH.

WITH joy, bleſt Youth, we ſaw thee reach the goal,
Fair was thy frame, and delicate thy ſoul,
Where, join'd at once, the ſofteſt manners met,
Truth, judgment, ſweetneſs, innocence, and wit;
The *Graces*, and the *Muſes*, came combin'd,
Thoſe to adorn thy body, theſe thy mind:
So form'd, he flew his race, 'twas quickly won,
'Twas but a ſtep, and finiſh'd when begun:
Nature, her ſelf, ſurpriz'd, wou'd add no more,
His life compleat in all its parts before;
But his few years, with pleaſing wonder, told
By Virtues, not by Days, and thought him old.
So far beyond his Age, thoſe Virtues ran,
That in a Boy, ſhe found him more than Man.
For Years, let wretches importune the ſkies,
'Till at the long expence of anguiſh wiſe,
They live to count their Days by miſeries.
Thoſe win the prize, who ſooneſt run the race,
And life burns brighteſt in the ſhorteſt ſpace.
So in the Convex-Glaſs embody'd run,
Drawn to a point, the glories of the Sun;
At once the gathering beams intenſely glow,
And fiercely thro' the ſtraiten'd circle flow,
In one ſtrong flame, conſpire the blended rays,
Run to a fire, and croud into a blaze.

To

To a Young FRIEND.

SHOULD ſmiling joys on all thy ſteps attend,
And health, to Monarchs coy, be STREPHON's friend.
Gay ſhould thy humour be, ſerene thy brow,
And, eaſy as thy thoughts, thy minutes flow:
Yet more, ſhould *Fame*, adopting thee her Son,
With partial hand, thy wildeſt wiſhes crown,
And promiſe to thy mem'ry late renown:
While at thy feet, the Earth, and Ocean lay
Their wealth, and glittering heaps choak up thy way.

Say—Would it not diſturb thy mirthful vein?
O'erturn the fooliſh *Babel* of thy brain?
The feeble charm diſſolve of human praiſe,
And with grim phantoms haunt thy genial days?
Should e'er this thought intrude, the Drudge, and I,
And ev'ry hapleſs Wight alike muſt die:
They from a weary march, and toilſome ſtrife,
By Death diſcharg'd ſhall ceaſe to ſuffer life;
I, what I love, muſt quit, and when the Sun
A few times more its ſhining courſe hath run,
Down

Down to the melancholy coaſts muſt go,
Which, nor his Morning beams, nor Ev'ning, know,
Where muſick's ſoothing voice (tho' Fables tell,
That ORPHEUS once could charm the ſhades of Hell)
And the loud trump of *Fame* are never heard,
The heavy, leaden, gates by ſilence bar'd:
Silence, which, baniſh'd to thoſe dre'ry plains,
O'er the wide waſte in peaceful terror reigns;
'Tis thither, my unweeting feet, ye tend,
And there, alas, muſt all life's mock'ry end.
Thence, folded up in ſleep, I ne'er ſhall riſe,
'Till the laſt ſummons ſhake the vaulted ſkies,
And the Earth's duſty chambers, where we lay,
Catch all on fire, and blaze unnat'ral Day.
Say—Will the world then wear that tempting face?
Wilt thou then court, as now, its fond embrace?
Confeſs—the pious man alone is wiſe,
Who looſe preſerves his heart from earthly ties;
When life's a Comedy, can wiſh it done,
Heir to diviner joys above the Sun;
Yet does not as a bare ſpectator ſit,
To laugh at follies, other men commit;
But takes the part of Providence aſſign'd
And, by a generous aim, to ſerve mankind,
If great his lot, ſhews 'tis below his mind.

Regard-

Regardleſs of the world, he journeys thro',
To heaven's high arch he lifts his ardent view,
The narrow, rough, aſcent of virtue treads,
Nor counts that painful, which to glory leads;
To thoſe bright manſions, thoſe ſerene abodes,
Where more than kings, rever'd on earth as gods,
The wiſer few, whom true ambition fir'd,
Exalted ſhine, admiring, and admir'd.
Thither, his Soul, enlarg'd from fleſhy bands,
Flies joyful; thence the proſpect round commands;
And at the laſt, the great, deciſive day,
He, fearleſs, ſhall the burning world ſurvey;
There, ſafe, in holy peace, with angels ſit,
While vaſt deſtruction raves beneath his feet.

PRIDE *and* DISCONTENT *ſilenced.*

AFTER a fruitleſs chaſe, reſolved to know,
Whether a world ſo lov'd, was more than ſhow,
The good, and ill, a fretful mortal laid
In paſſion's ſcales, uncertain, which outweigh'd;
But quickly found the beſt of human things,
Light as the gloſs that paints the inſect's wings;
While

While troubles, ſuch a weight, in fancy, have,
As brings down life, with ſorrow to the grave.

Of Patience, quite forſook, 'twas here he cry'd,
No friendly power doth over man preſide:
The ſcatter'd duſt, at firſt without a name,
By chance this maſs of wretchedneſs became;
And chance, with folly, ſhares the helpleſs prey,
'Till kinder death comes in, and ſweeps him quite away.

As theſe laſt words, with fault'ring tongue he ſpoke,
Earth trembled, and his ſoul with horror ſhook,
All heav'n appear'd incens'd, and from the flame,
A voice, more terrible than thunder, came.
Where is this child of Pride, who to be mine,
Himſelf denies, fond of an abject line?
Stand forth, ingrate; if thou haſt ſtrength to ſtand,
When not upheld by my almighty hand.
Dare puny atoms, heav'n's decrees controul?
And counſel him, who guides the boundleſs whole?
Laws to their Sovereign, and their Maker, give?
And his exiſtence doubt by whom they live?
Know,

Know, thankleſs man, when worms indignant ſwell,
As hardly us'd, it ſhews them us'd too well.
Take chearfully the lot, forecaſt, as beſt,
And patience will deliver thee to reſt:
Purg'd by afflictions, and by time approv'd,
Death will inſtruct thee fully, whom I lov'd;
But, if unhumbled ſtill, thou dar'ſt my frown,
The bolt uplifted, hangs to cruſh thee down.

A Thought at Waking.

THAT Morning too will dawn, when I ſhall riſe
Freſh from my duſt, and, ſoaring, ſeek the ſkies.
Then, why ſhould I lament that Night draws on;
And, tir'd, refuſe to lay my burthen down?
Tho', others more, yet I enough have ſeen,
And gueſs what is to be, by what hath been.
And, ſince my youthful days now almoſt paſt,
Have pleas'd ſo little, welcome thou my laſt.
'Tis the leaſt care, of all that fill this head,
What men deſign when I am ſto'ln to bed.
Cloſing my eyes, the world I now encloſe,
And fancy, waking, murthers my repoſe;
But in the grave, the houſe of rich, and poor,
Faſt I ſhall ſleep, and dream of life no more.

LIFE

LIFE *made Agreeable.*

SE'ST thou yon ſunny ſpot of riſing ground?
How bright it looks amid the ſhade around!
Juſt oppoſite, a ſhining clift on high,
Tranſmits the glories of the upper ſky:
Such is the good man's life, ſo ſhines his way,
Befriended by religion's chearful ray;
While guilty wretches ſit in death's cold ſhade,
And clouds, with tempeſts charg'd, low'r o'er their head;
On him deſcends a conſtant ſtream of light,
Which gilds each common object to his ſight;
Calm paſſions, joyous hopes, a mind ſerene,
Make all without to ſmile like all within;
Pleaſures from ev'ry ſoil ſpontaneous riſe,
And what is gloom to others, charms his eyes.
So when his beams the Sun on nature throws,
He ſtamps the beauteous colours which he ſhews.

To Mrs. SINGER,

Occaſioned by a Copy of her Verſes on DEATH.

ATTEND thou awful monarch of the grave,
And calmly hear a wretch thy pity crave.
Amaz'd I've ſeen thee over-run mankind,
Naſſau, immortal thought, in fetters bind.
Greatneſs, and hoary fame thy call obey,
And, if thou frown, ſink with a ſwift decay.
To ſtop thy progreſs and the field maintain,
Life ſtill attempts, but ſtill attempts in vain.
Let death approach; the daunted ſoul retires;
Extinguiſh'd are at once thoſe vital fires
That mov'd the earthy lump, now left forlorn,
A breathleſs corpſe, thy triumphs to adorn.
O ſpare thy conqueſt over me unknown,
Who need not feel thy power that power to own!
Go; let the fearleſs hero try thy rage,
And pamper'd Prelates at their feaſts ingage;
Between the miſer and his hoards divide,
And ſnatch the lover from his fair one's ſide;
Such acts thy empire will aloud proclaim,
And the ſurvivers bleſs, or dread, thy name.

For

For me; believe the ſlave, 'twill ſcarce be ſaid,
When I expire, the poor *Philander*'s dead!
But 'twill not be; my life I muſt reſign,
That life, which might I ſave, I'd not repine
To give thee up the whole Creation, were it mine.

'Twas thus, with penſive ſoul, and frighted look,
By coward nature taught, *Philander* ſpoke;
With horror then revolv'd, and ſilent dread,
The fatal moment that ſhould ſpeak him dead.
O had th' all-conqu'ring tyrant then appear'd,
Aim'd the dire ſtroke, and urg'd the fate he fear'd!
How dreadful had the meagre phantom been!
How doubly terrible his ſhape, and mien!
Struck with the ſight the Youth had inly groan'd,
And, rent from life, the ſad divorce bemoan'd,
Wreſtling with fate, and ſtruggling hard in death,
With ſtrong convulſive throws h'ad giv'n his parting breath.
But the Almighty, kinder than his fears,
Delay'd the ſtroke, propitious to his prayers,
And ſingling, from the myriads round his throne,
One of the gentleſt ſpirits, ſent him down,
To reconcile the ſhepherd to his fate,
And eaſe his anxious doubts about an after ſtate.

The

The charming SINGER's Voice and Form and Air
He feigns, and perſonates ſo well the Fair,
Deceiv'd I thought the very Nymph was there.
A Saint ſhe ſeem'd new riſen to the ſkies,
I gaz'd, unable to remove my eyes
Till ſhe recall'd my Soul, and bid me view
The myſtic ſcene her ready pencil drew.
Here *Death* I ſaw, not that wan, ghaſtly ſhade,
By guilt and melancholy fancy made,
Of aſpect ſtern, deform'd all o'er, and blind,
But ſoft, and blooming fair, and wond'rous kind,
Down by his ſide a golden quiver hung,
Full was the quiver, nor his bow unſtrung.
A golden ſhaft he choſe; 'twas tip'd with love,
" This to the man, he cried, moſt dear to heaven above: "
Then twang'd his bow, away the well-aim'd dart
Flew ſwift as thought, and pierc'd the favourite's heart,
A ſudden night involv'd his cloſing eyes,
And the glad Soul diſmiſs'd, ſought out her kindred ſkies.

Not diſtant far I ſpy'd a ſpacious cave,
The paſſage ſteep and gloomy, call'd the grave;
Diſmal it ſeem'd, but after ſhort deſcent,
Open'd into a plain of vaſt extent,

Where happy minds, from clay unfetter'd, rove,
Verdent the fields beneath, the skies serene above;
Nor summer's drought, nor wintry cold are there,
No lazy mists to clog the purer air;
Broad streams of bliss, from living springs supply'd,
In smooth magestic currents gently glide;
Along the banks the forms of angels throng,
And hymns divine are heard; the rapturous song
Begins before the birth of Time and Place,
Inquires who fill'd ev'n then th' unfathom'd Space,
Of his orig'nal glories wondring tells,
And how emboſom'd in himself he dwells,
Himself a Univerſe; from thence the song
To the Creation falls, and flows along,
Circling with Providence, till with that it drown
In vaſt Eternity, from whence it firſt begun.

Delightful World! Did we but know how bleſt
Are all the virtuous minds of thee poſſeſs'd,
Like *Philomela*, unattach'd to ſenſe,
We then ſhould welcome Death that call'd us hence,
Impatient fly into his icy arms,
And breathe our Souls away amidſt his killing charms.

HYMN

HYMN for the MORNING.

I.

AT Nature's birth, when on the Deep
Darkneſs and horror lay,
Let there be Light, th' Almighty ſaid,
And ſtrait ſprung forth the Day.

II.

This thy firſt bleſſing, to the world
The Sun revolving brings;
And ſmiling comfort viſits man,
Borne on the Morning's wings.

III.

Nature, imperfect, and undreſt,
Abhor'd the prying Light:
A world of beauteous objects now
Each Morn reveals to ſight.

IV.

Sweet is the Light, and bright the Sun
When he begins his race;
But neither Sun, nor Light is ſweet,
If thou conceal thy face!

V.

The Day advances, Morning flies,
And blazing Noon comes on
In vain, while I, in Darkneſs hid,
Lament my abſent Sun.

VI.

Speak, Lord, and to thy Servant's Soul
Thy quickening beams reſtore:
The Light with double luſtre ſhines
When Darkneſs goes before.

For the EVENING.

I.

FATHER of Lights, the Day is thine,
Thy hand its beams hath ſpread;
And, high in glory thron'd thy ſelf,
Thou draw'ſt the Ev'ning ſhade.

II.

The ſpringing Day invites my ſong,
The ſame its grateful cloſe,
To praiſe the ſweet viciſſitude
Of labour, and repoſe.

III.

Its beauty if the Morning boaſt,
If the whole Day its light;
Silence and Reſt, the foes of care,
Commend the ſheltering Night.

IV.

Thus all the quiet of this world
Agrees with Darkneſs beſt;
Unlike the Peace that reigns above,
And in the pious breaſt.

V. [The

V.

The good man's Conſcience, like his God,
In Light doth always dwell;
And what his Peace, his Calm, his Reſt,
Not he himſelf can tell.

VI.

His Soul beneath thy care, O Lord,
No anxious paſſion knows;
In drought his cooling ſtream thou art,
When weary his repoſe.

GOD *the* CREATOR.

I.

O Lord, how excellent thy Name!
How glorious to behold;
Engraven fair on all thy works
In characters of gold!

II.

On Heaven's unmeaſurable face,
In lines immenſely great,
In ſmall, on every leaf and flower
Creator God is writ.

III.

Tho' Reaſon be not given to all,
Nor voice to thee, O Sun;
Their Maker all proclaim, and here
Their language is but one.

IV.

From land to land, and world to world,
Thy fame is eccho'd round;
And ages, as they paſs, tranſmit
The never-dying ſound.

V.

Angels, the eldeſt Sons of light,
Began the lofty ſong;
They ſaw the Heavens unfurl'd abroad,
And Earth on Nothing hung.

VI.

Then Man the laſt and nobleſt piece
Of all this nether frame,
With the firſt vital breath he drew
Confeſt from whence he came.

VII.

And thou, my Soul, what wilt thou do
To ſpeak thy Former's praiſe?
Harmonious hymns, and raptures high,
Thy Theme and Thee ſhould raiſe.

GOD *the* PRESERVER.

I.

BEFORE the Lord our Maker we
With reverent awe ſhould bow;
Thou, Lord, the Maker art of all,
And their Preſerver Thou.

II.

The Being which thy power beſtow'd
Thy Providence maintains,
And the whole maſs of things is held
By ſtrong tho' ſecret chains.

III.

The ſtarry hoſts in order move,
Obſervant of their bounds;
And every Year and every Day
The Sun repeats his rounds,

IV.

Thro' pathleſs ſkies he finds his road,
Bent of himſelf to ſtray,
For God directs his ſteddy courſe
Along the doubtful way.

V.

Nor leſs in things that ſubject lie
To Time's all-conqu'ring power,
Are thy eternal laws fulfill'd
By every ſhort-liv'd hour.

VI.

While generations rise and fall,
Immortal is the race:
And Time may shift the fading scenes,
But not the Earth displace.

VII.

What Winter's withering breath destroys
The following Spring supplies;
And Age, in vigorous Youth renew'd,
Beholds itself and dies.

VIII.

The Life by Thee preserv'd, my God,
Shall all be spent for Thee,
And flowing bear thy praise along
Into Eternity.

The SOUL'S *Ascent.*

I.

WHEN I behold the Morning Lark
Begin her towering flight,
And hear her music, as she mounts,
Now less and less in sight,

II.

O that I had but wings, I cry,
Soon would I leave the ground,
See the world lessening to my view
Till it no more were found!

III. Tem-

III.

Tempeſts ſhould rage beneath my feet,
And clouds and vapours fly,
While imitating Angel's ſongs,
I pierc'd a calmer ſky.

IV.

Tranſported with unknown delight,
I ſhould this Being ſcorn;
Forget from whence my humble birth,
And never more return.

V.

Thus from the bands of fleſh enlarg'd,
My Soul will nobly riſe,
With nothing but her in-born ſtrength
To bear her to the ſkies.

VI.

Till then, Lord, lend her faith and love,
And with expanded wings
She to thy Throne her flight will aim,
And to celeſtial things.

The DIVINE IMMENSITY.

An ODE.

I.

O Thou Supreme Eternal Mind,
Who rul'ſt the fates of human kind,
To thy all-penetrating eye,
The depths of Earth, and Sea, and heavenly heights,
Where Monſters creep, or Angels wing their flights,
Are all reveal'd; for in thy ſpacious hand they lie!

II.

Forgive thy Creature who aſpir'd,
With pride of Reaſon madly fir'd,
Reaſon which thou hadſt juſt beſtow'd,
With ſwelling thought the utmoſt bound to gain
Of boundleſs Excellence; Enquiry vain!
Yet pleas'd, diſcovers none can fill his heart but God!

III.

When all things in th' unreal deep
Of night and ſilence, lay aſleep,
Thou hadſt eternal Ages ſeen:
The narrow ſtint of planetary rounds
Suits not thy Being; and, beyond the bounds
Of Place, thy Eſſence overflows the vaſt Inane.

IV. This

IV.

This wide ſtretch'd Univerſe in Thee
Fares like an Atom in the Sea;
Nor bank nor bottom can be found:
Like duſt we on thy boſom careleſs float,
Or overſet by ſome unequal thought,
We loſe ourſelves, abſorb'd in the abyſs [profound.

V.

The pathleſs Sea from ſhore to ſhore
A ſailing Duſt may meaſure o'er,
And caſt on lands forget to roam;
But ſhould we with the ſwitneſs of a ray
Millions of years thro' thy expanſion ſtray,
Still an untravell'd Infinite would be to come.

VI.

Thy Attributes, a ſum untold,
Reſemble lamps of burniſh'd gold
Hung all around the vaulted ſky;
Or rather like ubiquitary light,
Which thro' all places ſpread, in all is bright,
A luſtre they diffuſe thro' dark Immenſity.

VII.

Thrice happy who injoy the grace
To ſee the beauties of thy face,
Nor ſuffer from their love of change!
Still as they higher climb, new ſcenes ariſe,
The proſpect widening ſtill, dilates their joys,
And ſtill from world to world, all worlds of [bliſs, they range.

VIII. But

VIII.

But how ſhall Souls that dwell below,
In fleſh confin'd, thy Preſence know,
Inviſible to mortal eye?
To theſe, when pure, thou doſt thy ſelf reveal,
Thy Spirit's vital energy they feel,
And ſecret whiſpers tell them thou art ever [nigh.

IX.

This ſlender Altar, Lord, I raiſe,
Compos'd of Wonder, to thy praiſe;
Accept what gratitude demands.
Amidſt Earth's blended tongues, with th' [Ocean's roar,
'Midſt countleſs multitudes who Thee adore,
Thou hear'ſt my feeble voice, and ſe'ſt my [lifted hands.

An ODE *on the Author's Recovery from Sickneſs.*

I.

THEE, bounteous Author of my days,
Thee, their Reſtorer, let me praiſe;
Thee, gracious God, who from the gates of death,
Where I in penſive ſilence ſat,
Waiting the laſt arreſt of fate,
My Soul did'ſt ſave, and ſnatch my fleeting breath.

II.

My voice with weakneſs faint become,
And hollow, like the empty tomb,
Hoarſe and ſcarcely to be known;
Strong and animated grown,
Shall be imploy'd to ſound thy fame:
And while in loftier notes I laud that Name,
Which lately I invok'd with feeble cry,
Rocks, Hills, and Vales, ſhall to my Song reply.

III. Let

III.

Let me remember too, with what ſurprize
The ſudden dimneſs vail'd mine eyes.
How ſickly and how pale the light,
When Death's impending ſhade,
Preſage of everlaſting night,
Had round involv'd my head!
To Heav'n my languid looks I turn'd,
Nor long my ſtate unpitied mourn'd
Celeſtial Effluence purg'd the gloom away,
And to my fainting eyes reſtor'd the day:
Therefore for Thee, my God, theſe orbs ſhall [roll,
And to thy radient Seat I'll dart, thro' them, [my Soul.

IV.

Think, flutt'ring Heart, when on the [ſteep
Of that tremendous boundleſs deep
Eternity, in ſad ſuſpence I ſtood,
How all my trifling hopes and fears,
My ſenſeleſs joys, and idle tears,
Vaniſh'd at proſpect of the frightful flood!

V. Sure,

V.

Sure, Life is but a hudded dream,
And Time a ſwift, deceitful ſtream,
This vain world a ſhining bubble,
Only full of care and trouble:
Yet this, great God, this is the prize,
For which deluded mortals Heaven deſpiſe;
Blinded with paſſion after this they run,
And ſee not, 'till they ſee themſelves undone!

VI.

Lord, when thy hand the ſable curtain drew,
And future worlds diſclos'd to view,
Theſe were my thoughts; and ſuch are [ſtill
The leſſons of the grave;
But as the purple channels fill,
We gayer fancies have;
The world its former charms puts on,
And we to doat again are won.
But, rather than this ſhameful chaſe repeat,
And groſly ſuffer, having ſeen the cheat;
A ſtranger let me live to fatal eaſe,
That greatneſs may not tempt, wealth ſhine, [nor flattery pleaſe!

VII. Rais'd

VII.

Rais'd from my bed, I'll higher riſe,
And, ſpringing upward, make the ſkies,
Nor ſhall this load of fleſh retard my flight:
So, when the Eagle's Youth returns,
With thirſt of bold attempts he burns,
Eſſays his wings, and tow'ring mocks the ſight.

VIII.

All my paſt follies be forgot,
Loſt in one univerſal blot:
From this Æra Years begin
Happy, and unſtain'd with ſin;
And as if life did now commence,
And Nature's beauties, now firſt ſtruck my [ſenſe,
Tranſported let me ſing from whom I came,
Admire his works, and praiſe the faultleſs [frame.

IX.

My Soul, thou Source of life, with health in- [ſpire,
And actuate it with thy fire;
Let all its pow'rs partake the heat
Imparted by thy love,
In all a heav'nly vigour beat
Its every ſpring to move.

If

If thus my body and my mind
Shall both thy quick'ning influence find,
With both thy glory I will ſtrive to raiſe,
And to thy ſervice conſecrate my days;
And while this aims at Heav'n, that bends to [Earth,
Each part will honour Thee, and own its ſeve- [ral Birth.

X.

Tho' now delay'd, yet Death will come,
By fates inevitable doom;
When once the deſtin'd period is mature,
No Prayers for reſpite will prevail,
That mightieſt engine then will fail,
And the diſeaſe we ſlight deſpair of cure.

XI.

Sun, ſtand thou ſtill, a mortal ſaid,
The mortal's voice the Sun obey'd,
Sudden check'd his rapid wheel
On the brow of Heaven's ſteep hill.
To double length he ſtretch'd that day;
But then, impatient of his longer ſtay,
His fall he haſten'd and withdrew the light:
So ſtopp'd a while, my Sun will ſet in Night.

XII.

Wiſely the bleſſing uſe thou muſt reſign;
The bleſſing will not long be thine;
Prepare, my Soul, for thy remove
From this poor ſhed of clay,
To ſeats of fadeleſs bliſs above,
And ever-during day.
Death ſhews not there his meagre face,
And guilt's a ſtranger to the place.
No annals to record, as here, the time,
The bleſs'd preſerve; but ever in their prime,
Let countleſs ages glide away untold,
Which witneſs, as they paſs, to joys that ne'er
[grow old.

A HYMN.

I.

WHILE Seraphs round thy glorious Throne
In holy raptures burn,
In lands of drought and ſhades of death,
Thy abſence, Lord, I mourn.

II. The

II.

The ſubject of their ſongs they view,
This elevates them high;
O were my ſight but bleſt as theirs,
With theirs my ſongs ſhould vie.

III.

But ah, while oft to Heav'n I look,
And longing ſeek thee there,
My eyes with expectation fail,
And I almoſt deſpair.

IV.

Yet ceaſe I not to praiſe my God,
Whoſe mercy chears my days,
And thro' a vale of guilt and tears,
Untouch'd, my Soul conveys.

V.

While I with worlds of light above
Compare our changing ſpot,
Scarce can my reſtleſs heart forbear
Repining at its lot.

VI.

But 'tis enough that Heav'n's my Home,
And th' Earth while paſſing thro',
Tho' trackleſs ſpaces lie between,
My Home I have in view.

VII.

The ſhining portal ſight ſurveys,
Faith boldly enters in,
And taks poſſeſſion for my Soul
Releas'd by Death from Sin.

A HYMN.

I.

THEE, glorious God, whom none can ſee
Yet all mankind muſt own,
Our hearts acknowledge, and to Thee
We ſpeak in ev'ry groan.

II.

Our Souls confin'd to darkſome clay,
A ſad and heavy load,
'Midſt fogs of ſenſe miſtake their way
To Thee, their ſov'reign good.

III.

We travel thro' this world of ſin,
As o'er inchanted ground,
Following the fond deluſive ſcene
'Till in perdition drown'd.

IV. Heav'n

IV.

Heav'n warns us of the dang'rous road,
And would our ſteps recal,
But we muſt tread where crowds have trod,
And where they fell we fall.

V.

Great God, diſſolve the dreadful ſpell,
Which does our Reaſon blind,
That reſcu'd from the gates of hell,
We thy abode may find.

An EPITAPH

On a young Lady who died in her Twenty Firſt Year.

GRIEV'D to behold in Youth's enchanting bloom,
Her lovely charge deſcend into the tomb,
" And is it thus, afflicted VIRTUE cries,
" That Heav'n diſtinguiſhes the early wiſe?
" Thus crowns the tender Parents watchful care?"
Celeſtial PIETY, her Siſter fair,

With

With accents mild, and looks ſerenely bright,
That ſcatter'd all the horrors of the Night,
Reply'd—" Ceaſe thou their happy lot to mourn,
" Who never more from reſt to toil return.
" Thy Pupils who to things unſeen aſpire,
" And endleſs joys, ſtruck by my ſacred fire,
" Their taſk fulfill'd, lay down this mortal load:
" They cannot die too young who live to God."

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